



Brandon Hall Group™
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS®
2026

Excellence Awards Brochure

Excellence in Action Awards

For more details, payment information, a list of previous winners
and FAQ's, please visit

www.excellenceawards.brandonhall.com



Contact Us

Email: awards@brandonhall.com | Main Website: www.brandonhall.com

About the Excellence Awards

Now entering its 33rd year, the Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Awards is the most prestigious awards program in the industry. Often called the “Academy Awards” by Learning, Talent and Business Executives, the program was one of the first of its kind when it debuted in 1993. The awards recognize the best organizations that have successfully developed and deployed programs, strategies, modalities, processes, systems, and tools that have achieved measurable results. We are honored to receive applications from organizations around the world ranging from small, medium, large, and global enterprises, to government, not-for-profits, and associations.

Human Capital Management

Open: Closed
Deadline: Closed
Announcements: August 13, 2026

Who should enter:

Training, learning, talent, HR or other related departments can either enter alone or together with a helping organization (such as a vendor aka solution provider, or consultant). Helping organizations cannot enter alone.

Technology

Open: April 20, 2026
Deadline: September 4, 2026
Announcements: December 3, 2026

Who should enter:

The Technology Program has a dedicated focus on entries from solution providers offering technologies to learning, talent management, talent acquisition, HR, workforce management and sales enablement organizations, as well as technology organizations and departments. Both can enter alone or jointly with their client organizations.

Education Technology

Open: April 20, 2026
Deadline: September 4, 2026
Announcements: December 3, 2026

Who should enter:

The EdTech Program has a dedicated focus on entries from innovative and cutting-edge trailblazers in education technology. This program is for K-12, Universities, Business Schools, Professional Development and Education Associations, Non-For-Profit, and Government Agencies.

Excellence in Action

Open: May 4, 2026
Deadline: September 25, 2026
Announcements: November 12, 2026

Who should enter:

Excellence in Action is designed for organizations of all sizes and industries that prioritize employee feedback and strive to create inclusive, thriving workplaces. Whether you're a small startup or a multinational corporation, if you're dedicated to amplifying employee voices and driving positive change, this program is for you.

Awards FAQs

Are our entries kept confidential?

In the online entry form you are given the opportunity to decide whether or not you would like Brandon Hall Group to publish your entry. If you decide not to give permission for your entry to be published, please click "No" when asked if you are giving permission to publish when submitting your entry form. If you select "No" – the information you submit will be kept confidential and will not be published in our member center.

Can we enter if our program is still in development? Or only once completed? What if it's a new program that we just launched? What if it was launched some years ago (i.e. 2-3 years prior to the date we are entering for an award)?

While we do not have timing requirements for when a program is implemented or how long it must be in place, organizations are encouraged to submit once their programs have been in place long enough to show impact and measurable results. This is an important aspect of the judging criteria so it is critical that you can demonstrate the same before submittal.

Can I request an extension?

Please contact the program director Rachel Cooke at: awards@brandonhall.com to discuss an extension.

What language must the entry be written in?

All entries must be written in English.

How are winners selected?

Judges score each entry, and then the judging and scoring are reviewed by Brandon Hall Group's executive leadership team, led by Rachel Cooke. The level of the award is determined by the number of points. There is a point range for Gold, Silver, and Bronze. We don't grade on any kind of curve – the point total determines the award level. That is why in some categories, there may be several bronzes, and silvers, but fewer golds. Or if a category is particularly strong, maybe more golds than silver and bronze. And some categories may not have any winners.

What is the judging criterion?

Each category has its own judging criterion that is unique to the program area.

Each of the entries will need to show examples of the following:

- Design of the programs or technologies
- The use and objectives of the program
- Overall benefits and measurable results

Supporting graphics, demos, links and videos where appropriate
Please download our brochure for the full list of descriptions and judging criteria for each category.

If you have additional questions, please contact us at: awards@brandonhall.com.

Excellence in Action Awards FAQs

What is the Excellence in Action Awards Program?

The Excellence in Action Awards Program is a recognition program that honors organizations that prioritize the voices of their employees. This award recognizes organizations of all sizes and industries that are committed to enhancing employee engagement, fostering a people-centric culture and enhancing productivity through employee feedback.

Who is eligible to participate?

Organizations of all sizes and industries that have implemented programs, processes or projects that have prioritized the voices of their employees; that foster employee feedback and have implemented and/or underwent change based on employee feedback.

Is there an entry fee?

The entry fee is \$575 USD.

Can we submit entries for multiple years?

Yes, organizations can submit entries in consecutive years, especially if they have implemented new change initiatives or significantly improved their existing programs..

What are you looking for in the Video Testimonial?

The most compelling testimonials feature authentic employee voices from various organizational levels discussing how employee feedback, innovation and ideas have brought an enriched employee experience, aligned with business objectives and fostered a people-centric culture. Videos should be 60-90 seconds in length, include diverse perspectives, and highlight specific examples of successful programs, processes and/or projects.

When and how are winners announced?

Winners will be announced in November 2026. Details will be forthcoming at a later date and will include an online announcement, press release highlighting outstanding award winners, social media posting, and direct notification. A formal awards ceremony will follow at the HCM Excellence Conference which will be held in February, 2027.

What do winners receive?

Winners receive:

- Digital Badge and Certificate
- PR Guide
- Possible Invitation to participate in an Excellence at Work Podcast
- Recognition at the HCM Excellence Conference

How should we handle confidential information?

Clearly mark any confidential information in red highlighting, and we will ensure it remains secure and is only shared with judges who have signed non-disclosure agreements. You may redact sensitive financial or personal information as needed.

2026 EXCELLENCE IN ACTION AWARDS CATEGORIES

- 6 Attracting Top Talent >>
- 6 Benefits and Perks >>
- 6 Career Development >>
- 6 Change Readiness >>
- 6 Company Culture >>
- 6 Communication >>
- 6 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) >>
- 6 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) >>
- 6 Employee Autonomy >>
- 7 Employee Engagement >>
- 7 Employer Branding >>
- 7 Feedback and Recognition >>
- 7 Hybrid Work >>
- 7 Innovation and Creativity >>
- 7 Leadership >>
- 7 Learning and Development >>
- 7 Manager Effectiveness >>
- 7 Organizational Teamwork and Collaboration >>
- 8 Pay and Compensation >>
- 8 Physical Workspace >>
- 8 Promotion and Succession >>
- 8 Talent Mobility >>
- 8 Technology Environment >>
- 8 Tools and Resources >>
- 8 Wellness >>
- 8 Work-Life Balance >>

**Download the Excellence in Action
Awards entry form >>**

Attracting Top Talent >>

The category, **Attracting Top Talent**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional practices in attracting and recruiting top talent, as rated by their own employees. This program celebrates companies that have built outstanding talent acquisition processes that resonate with both candidates and existing employees.

Benefits and Perks >>

Recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional programs and offerings that support employee wellbeing and lifestyle beyond base compensation, such as health insurance, retirement planning, and lifestyle perks.

Career Development >>

The category, **Career Development** recognizes organizations who demonstrate exceptional commitment to employee professional growth and career advancement through innovative programs and initiatives. This prestigious recognition celebrates organizations that create outstanding career pathways and development opportunities while fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional achievement.

Change Readiness >>

The category, **Change Readiness**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional commitment to preparing their workforce for organizational transformation. This employee-driven awards program celebrates companies that excel in change management practices and maintain high levels of employee engagement during periods of transition.

Communication >>

Honors organizations for exceptional practices in clear, consistent, and open information sharing across all levels, including leadership transparency, town halls, and feedback mechanisms.

Company Culture >>

The category, **Company Culture**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional commitment to fostering positive workplace cultures through measurable employee feedback and concrete initiatives. This program celebrates companies that prioritize employee wellbeing, engagement, and satisfaction while maintaining high performance standards.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) >>

The category, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating outstanding commitment to corporate social responsibility as rated by their most important stakeholders - their employees. This unique awards program emphasizes authentic employee feedback and engagement in CSR initiatives.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) >>

The category, **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating outstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through the authentic experiences and feedback of their employees. Unlike traditional awards that focus on policies and metrics alone, this program centers employee voices to identify organizations truly excelling in creating inclusive workplaces.

Employee Autonomy >>

Recognizes organizations that empower their workforce with decision-making power and flexibility, fostering a culture of trust and decentralized responsibility.

Employee Engagement >>

The category, **Employee Engagement**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating outstanding commitment to fostering a dynamic, inclusive and engaging workplace culture. This award celebrates organizations that go above and beyond in creating environments where employees thrive, contribute meaningfully, and feel valued as integral members of their organization.

Employer Branding >>

The category, **Employer Branding**, recognizes organizations that excel in creating and maintaining a compelling employer brand as rated by their own employees. This program celebrates companies that successfully align their external employer brand promise with the actual employee experience.

Feedback and Recognition >>

The category, **Feedback and Recognition**, recognizes organizations that prioritize the feedback of their employees and provides for recognition within the organization. This award celebrates organizations who prioritize the feedback and accomplishments of their employees and provide programs of recognition and reward and whose leadership teams actively champion and participate in recognition initiatives.

Hybrid Work >>

The category, **Hybrid Work**, recognizes organizations that have successfully implemented and maintained outstanding hybrid work environments, as rated by their own employees. This program celebrates companies that prioritize flexibility, productivity, and employee wellbeing through innovative hybrid work policies and practices.

Innovation and Creativity >>

The category, **Innovation and Creativity**, recognizes organizations that encourage teams and departments to foster exceptional creativity and innovation within the organization. This program celebrates initiatives that drive meaningful change, encourage creative problem-solving, and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Leadership >>

The category, **Leadership**, recognizes organizations that create outstanding leadership development initiatives and celebrates the positive impact of effective leadership across our organization. This program empowers employees to evaluate and acknowledge leadership programs that have significantly contributed to their professional growth and the company's success.

Learning and Development >>

The category, **Learning and Development**, recognizes organizations that demonstrate outstanding commitment to employee development through innovative, effective, and employee-centered learning programs. These awards celebrate organizations whose L&D initiatives have made a meaningful impact on employee growth, engagement, and career advancement.

Manager Effectiveness

Celebrates organizations that develop managers who excel in coaching, providing actionable feedback, and building strong relationships that drive team performance.

Organizational Teamwork and Collaboration >>

The category, **Organizational Teamwork and Collaboration**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating and fostering collaboration and teamwork. It celebrates initiatives that demonstrably improve cross-functional cooperation, enhance team dynamics, and create lasting positive impacts on organizational culture.

Pay and Compensation >>

Honors organizations that implement fair, equitable, and transparent compensation strategies that communicate employee value and align with performance.

Physical Workspace >>

Recognizes organizations for creating physical environments — whether in-office or providing home-office equipment—that support productivity, safety, and employee belonging.

Promotion and Succession >>

The category, **Promotion and Succession**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional commitment to developing future leaders, creating clear advancement pathways, and implementing innovative approaches to talent development and succession planning. This prestigious program celebrates organizations that excel in identifying, preparing, and advancing internal talent while ensuring organizational continuity and growth through strategic succession management.

Talent Mobility >>

The category, **Talent Mobility**, recognizes organizations who excel in providing career growth opportunities through effective internal mobility programs. These awards are unique because they are primarily based on employee feedback and experiences, ensuring authentic recognition of programs that truly impact workforce development.

Technology Environment >>

The category, **Technology Environment**, recognizes organizations for creating outstanding technology environments for their employees. By celebrating excellence in digital workplace experience, we aim to promote best practices, drive continuous improvement, and ensure technology enables rather than hinders productivity.

Tools and Resources >>

Recognizes organizations for providing the technology, software, and hardware support systems required for employees to perform their jobs effectively.

Wellness >>

The category, **Wellness**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional commitment to employee health and wellbeing through innovative, effective, and employee-centered wellness initiatives. This program celebrates organizations that create sustainable cultural changes that positively impact employee wellness outcomes.

Work-Life Balance >>

The category, **Wellness**, recognizes organizations for demonstrating exceptional commitment to employee health and wellbeing through innovative, effective, and employee-centered wellness initiatives. This program celebrates organizations that create sustainable cultural changes that positively impact employee wellness outcomes.