

Welcome to the 2021 Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures Award program

Since 2004, the Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures Awards program has recognized the many ways that great culture builds great organizations. For many organizations, corporate culture shines the brightest in tough times – and we think that's worth celebrating.

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed organizations to redefine how they measure success and the role that corporate culture plays in that success. The Canada's Most Admired submission guidelines for 2021 will allow nominated organizations to highlight not just what makes their culture unique, but also how culture has helped to shape organizational performance.

Qualifications

Only organizations that have been nominated to the Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures™ program, and that have been notified of this nomination by Waterstone Human Capital, are eligible to make a submission. Organizations must fit into one of the following categories in order to qualify for the program:

- Emerging (revenues must be over \$5 million to under \$25 million, and over 25 employees)
- Growth (revenues must be over \$25 million under \$100 million)
- Mid-Market (revenues of \$100 million to less than \$500 million)
- Enterprise (revenues of \$500 million and above), and
- Broader Public Sector (not-for-profit, government, charitable organizations and crown corporations)

Winners of the Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures™ Awards will be announced in November. Winning organizations must be present at the Awards Celebration to accept their award. *

Submission Portal

All submitting organizations will receive a confidential and secure link to the Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures submission portal. Your written submission must be uploaded through the portal before the June deadline. No additional documentation will be permitted or available to be uploaded unless it is specifically asked for in the submission portal. Submissions for 2021 must be in the submission portal and locked by **June 30, 2021**.

Your Story

The Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures awards are about more than celebrating great corporate culture – they're about celebrating how corporate culture has helped your organization drive performance. Your submission should tell the story of what you're doing, why you're doing it, who's involved, and how you're measuring success. Some things to consider:

- Provide a mix of qualitative and quantitative examples.
- Give context – not just what you are/aren't doing, but why it matters/sets you apart.
- Tell a story – include people, show growth or planning where you can, give examples, celebrate successes.
- Don't try and tell everything – give an overview and a few strong examples to support your case in each section.
- Use the full word count in each section.

Questions?

We're here to help! Waterstone hosts submission writing webinars for all nominated organizations each Spring – watch your email. You can also reach out to info@waterstonehc.com with any questions. Note: While Waterstone administers this program, we do not participate in/have influence over the voting process or the selection of the award winners.

The 2021 Submission Guideline

When your culture is aligned with your strategy, and your team is aligned with your culture, you see enormous engagement—and exceptional results!

Unless otherwise indicated, this guideline applies to submissions for all award categories. Your submission must be in the submission portal and locked by **June 30, 2021**. You will have a chance to edit the submission following your submission interview.

Part 1: Introduction

You have **250 words** to describe your organization and what your organization does. We also recommend using this space to define your culture and outline what high performance means at your organization.

Part 2: Key Performance Areas

There are six key performance areas included in the written submission. You have a **maximum of 500 words per section** to tell your story as it relates to each performance area.

Important note: graphics, tables, multi-media, and other attachments are not allowed unless otherwise noted. You can include links; however, we recommend that you use them sparingly and to enhance your story rather than to introduce new/core information. Please do not embed links – include the full URL.

1. Vision and Leadership

This section should tell the story of the organization's purpose, mission and vision, explore the role that leadership plays in building and sustaining a strong culture, and talk about how culture is communicated within your organization. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- The purpose, mission, vision and values of the organization.
- The role of leadership in setting, maintaining, and transforming culture.
- How leaders set the tone for strong, open communication.
- How leaders drive/communicate the cultural pillars throughout the organization.
- The role that leadership plays in guiding/inspiring people in both prosperous and challenging times.
- How leadership inspires people toward a new level of growth and achievement.
- Key methods of communication/listening used to support culture throughout the organization.

For Broader Public Sector submissions only:

- How are Directors chosen?
- What is the length of their terms?
- How are Directors engaged in/with the culture of the organization?

2. Recruitment and Hiring for Fit

This section should tell the story of how your organization finds talent, and the best practices, strategies, tools, and services you use to recruit, hire, and onboard team members who not only fit your culture but also add to it. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- Your recruitment process and how it contributes to culture fit or culture add.
- The key behaviours or values that you assess for in the recruitment process.
- What strategies and tools have been a success and why.
- The role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in your recruitment efforts.
- How you measure your success in recruitment and talent acquisition.
- How you communicate culture as part of your employment brand and how you leverage culture during onboarding.

3. People Development and Talent Management

This section should tell the story of how you develop, support, retain, and celebrate your people, your culture, and your successes. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- The role that learning, training, and development play in your culture and how you support the development of your people – personally and professionally.
- How you identify and support team members to grow within the organization.
- Your voluntary turnover rate (remember to provide context).
- How you celebrate successes and recognize the efforts of your team/the achievements of your organization.
- Details of your total rewards and recognition programs and how these serve as a competitive advantage for your organization.

4. Cultural Alignment and Measurement

This section should tell the story of how your organization sustains its culture and should focus on the 'what', 'why', 'when', and 'how' of employee engagement and culture measurement. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- How you ensure that your culture is aligned to your vision, people, and processes.
- How you ensure that your culture is helping to drive performance.
- How and when you measure and assess your culture, and how you action feedback.
- How and when you measure employee engagement and how you action feedback.
- Key metrics from any recent surveys or polls related to culture or engagement (e.g. eNPS), how that data compares to past surveys, and how you leverage the data to help drive culture and performance.

5. Corporate Social Responsibility

This section should tell the story of how your organization and your individual team members are supporting your communities and broader social/environmental/economic issues. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- How you choose the programs and causes you support and how do they connect back to your purpose and culture?
- Who is involved in your programs and how they get involved.
- How engaged your team members are in your efforts (e.g., participation numbers, campaign results).
- Which of your programs are organization-led and which are employee-driven.
- What best practices are considered in implementing and maintaining programs?
- How the organization has incorporated values-driven efforts into your brand.
- If you don't yet have a well-developed program, describe your plan and timeline for future programs.

6. Organizational Performance

This section should bring together the story of how your culture, and everything that goes into building and sustaining your culture, is driving performance. Some areas that you may want to touch on include:

- What metrics, beyond financial, you use to determine success.
- What performance means to your organization and how your definition of performance has evolved as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- How your culture has influenced performance.
- How you have leveraged the efforts of your team to help drive success.
- How the organization has performed relative to its purpose, mission, vision and goals.
- How your performance compares to others in the sector/industry.
- Context around your financial reporting.

Required – Emerging, Growth, Mid-Market and Enterprise Submissions:

- Three of the following financial indicators for your Canadian operations**:
 - EBITA
 - Three-year EBITA growth (percentages are acceptable)
 - Three-year revenue growth (percentages are acceptable)
 - Industry-relevant data (e.g., market share, industry or network comparable markers, share of North American or global operations, etc.)

Required – Broader Public Sector:

- The following operational indicators **:
 - Funding sources (by type) and the relevant percentages of total revenue.
 - Your fundraising ratio (if applicable).

*Individual and team tickets will be available for purchase beginning November 2021.

**Organizational performance data can be included in the body of your response or included as a PDF attachment. Note that attachments must be no longer than two pages and must be related to organizational performance data only. Waterstone Human Capital can provide a template attachment on request. Attachments that do not include performance data will be deleted before the submission goes to the Board of Governors; attachments that are longer than two pages will be edited and only the first two pages will be sent to the Board of Governors.