

HR Team of the Year

Winner

Wincanton

Logistics is a challenging industry. It is hugely important to society, yet, afflicted by massive skills shortages and an ageing workforce. It is exactly where good HR practice is needed most.

Wincanton's HR team, 190 strong and part formed during the the pandemic, has not just supported the company through challenging times but enabled it to excel.

The team provides both strategic and tactical support to the business and its 20,000-plus workers. A number of thought leadership teams, deemed Centres of Excellence, likewise focus on issues like talent and development, industrial relations, and reward, driving impressive solutions to these long-term issues.

One such solution, the Future Drivers Programme, has addressed the well-publicised shortfall in HGV drivers.

Through it, the HR team supported more than 480 existing and new employees to qualify as drivers by putting together a package of targeted apprenticeships and fast-track licence acquisition schemes.

With 58% of this year's intake under 34 and 6% female (against an industry average of 0.7%), the programme will help build a more resilient and diverse workforce.

The company's apprenticeship strategy is immensely comprehensive. Comprising more than 80 programmes, it supports apprentices from 17 to 64 years of age in roles from anything such as driving and warehousing to HR and finance.

The HR team's efforts show its care towards developing diverse talent internally: nearly a third (31%) of Wincanton's apprentices are female, and 3% have declared disabilities. A blended delivery style ensures it is accessible by all staff.

Retention is high for the industry at 76% after completion, and engagement has seen continuous improvement.

The team's comprehensive approach to talent has likewise seen a 50% increase in the company's graduate intake, with a 54% increase in female graduates and 37%



increase in ethnic minority graduates on its one-year placement scheme. The firm likewise offered 37 roles to long-term unemployed young people through the government's Kickstart scheme.

Diversity and inclusion is so important to the team that it pushed Wincanton to be among the first 50 signatories of the CBI's Change the Race: Ratio charter; it likewise works closely with the DWP's Disability Confident campaign and the Armed Forces Covenant for hiring veterans.

Thinking ahead, the HR team is working to secure vital skills for the future. Data, engineering and technology training have been key parts of its development programme.

Shortlisted

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Immediate Media

N Brown Group

Saga Group

UK Export Finance

During the two turbulent years of the HR team's existence, it has also overseen significant growth from the company's first acquisitions in more than a decade. Onboarding 700 employees in one fell swoop in September 2021, the team then brought 363 staff into the fold from a variety of different companies, successfully integrating them within the business.

The team's crucial support and ever-accelerating efforts towards building an inclusive and fulfilling company have contributed greatly to the firm's success. In the last financial year, Wincanton brought on 4.1% more staff, increasing the number of drivers by 3.9% to 5,300 against a trend of severe skill shortages.

These efforts have enabled the company to grow its revenue by 16.3% and underlying profit before tax by 23.1%, a stunning result – all while driving engagement up from 66% to 69% in the past year.

Judges were hugely impressed. One said: "I really liked the benefits to the business achieved by having a well-articulated people strategy, understanding the need to create opportunities for more drivers, and succession planning." **HR**