

# HR Director of the Year

## Winner

### Carol-Ann White, Landor & Fitch

In the HR Director of the Year award, *HR* magazine seeks true people leaders who are collaborative; committed to diversity and inclusion (D&I) and whose work in the past 12-months in particular has been exemplary.

This year, Carol-Ann White, group chief people officer at design agency Landor & Fitch, not only fulfilled each of these requirements, but she did so with flair and a clear commitment to challenging the HR status quo.

In her time at L&F, White has helped guide its evolution from traditional brand consulting agency to an integrated brand transformation group. In addition to championing employees during this change she has driven a total rethink of the firm's people proposition.

Examples of her creative approach to HR are easily found. The firm's Above & Beyond programme, for example, gives every person in the business up to 10% of their working time (around 220 hours each year) to dedicate to personal growth. Employees spend the time as they choose. In the past 12 months, staff have chosen to develop tech skills, visit exhibitions for creative inspiration and even built a tech platform to store the firm's case studies more effectively.

Thanks to White, rigid annual appraisals have been replaced with an employee-led approach to development. Now an ongoing process, development is driven by individuals and their managers according to a framework of core types of conversation: check-ins, career, reward, and challenging conversations. The model has already been adopted by a number of companies within L&F's parent company and communication group WPP.

White's commitment to diversity and inclusion at work is estimable. In partnership with the global CEO, she has



empowered women across the business. More than half of the firm's employees (56%) and 46% of its global leadership team are women. A stunning result, considering the media and communications industry averages a 37% ratio of women in leadership globally.

She has likewise lent significant support to the women in leadership programmes Fast Forward and Walk the Talk, outside of L&F – though she has had excellent results when bringing both inside the company too. A staggering 94% of women across the WPP group said the programmes had helped them develop a bigger vision for themselves, and 95% felt empowered to lead change. Thanks in large part to her work, L&F was been listed as one of Great Places to Work's 2022 Best Places to Work for Women.

White has been committed to creating a brilliant inclusive hiring strategy that has seen the company leverage detailed data to ensure representation at every stage in the hiring process. In the past 12 months alone, L&F UK and US have hit significant targets of hiring 25% of new hires from underrepresented groups. This outstanding commitment to D&I can also be seen threaded through the company's Early Careers Strategy, likewise taking home a HR Excellence Awards trophy this year.

Thanks to her dedication, visible in the initiatives and strategy she drives every day, White has had a huge impact on L&F.

Due to her work on culture, 90% of employees agree that they can be themselves at work. Not only has this pushed a 7% improvement in retention, 91% of L&F staff now say they are proud to work there.

Each of the HR leaders on this year's shortlist have done some outstanding work but it was White's innovation and agility when adapting the HR strategy that marked her as a standout winner of this year's HR Director of the Year. **HR**

**Highly commended**  
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**Teresa Exelby, Community Integrated Care**

**Shortlisted**  
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**Joe Dent, Princes**  
**Maria Hawley, Fisher German**

**Kate Howdon, eStar Truck & Van**

**Corinne Mills, Alzheimer's Society**

**Phil Rimmer, Slater Helis**

**Victoria Soormally, Gallagher**

**Emma Simpson, Gleneagles**

**John Stewart, SSE**