

WORKLIFE AWARDS

DIGIDAY G L O S S Y **ModernRetail**

2021 Worklife Awards

In a year marked by the profound challenges of a persistent pandemic, but also the return of hope as quarantines lifted and a reconfiguration of office structures that included the long-term adoption of remote teams, the way business worked continued to transform.

This year's Worklife Awards winners capture responses, new directions and how companies worked to adapt to these changes and more. The organizations the judges selected adjusted to a series of new norms across 2021, even as they sustained commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion across their teams and sought new avenues for bringing wellness into their day-to-day working culture.

In this guide, all of the winners are in the spotlight. On the pages that follow, each program is unpacked for insights into the elements that worked best, and what company leaders everywhere can learn from the programs that made the 2021 list.

Most Innovative Culture

Buzzer

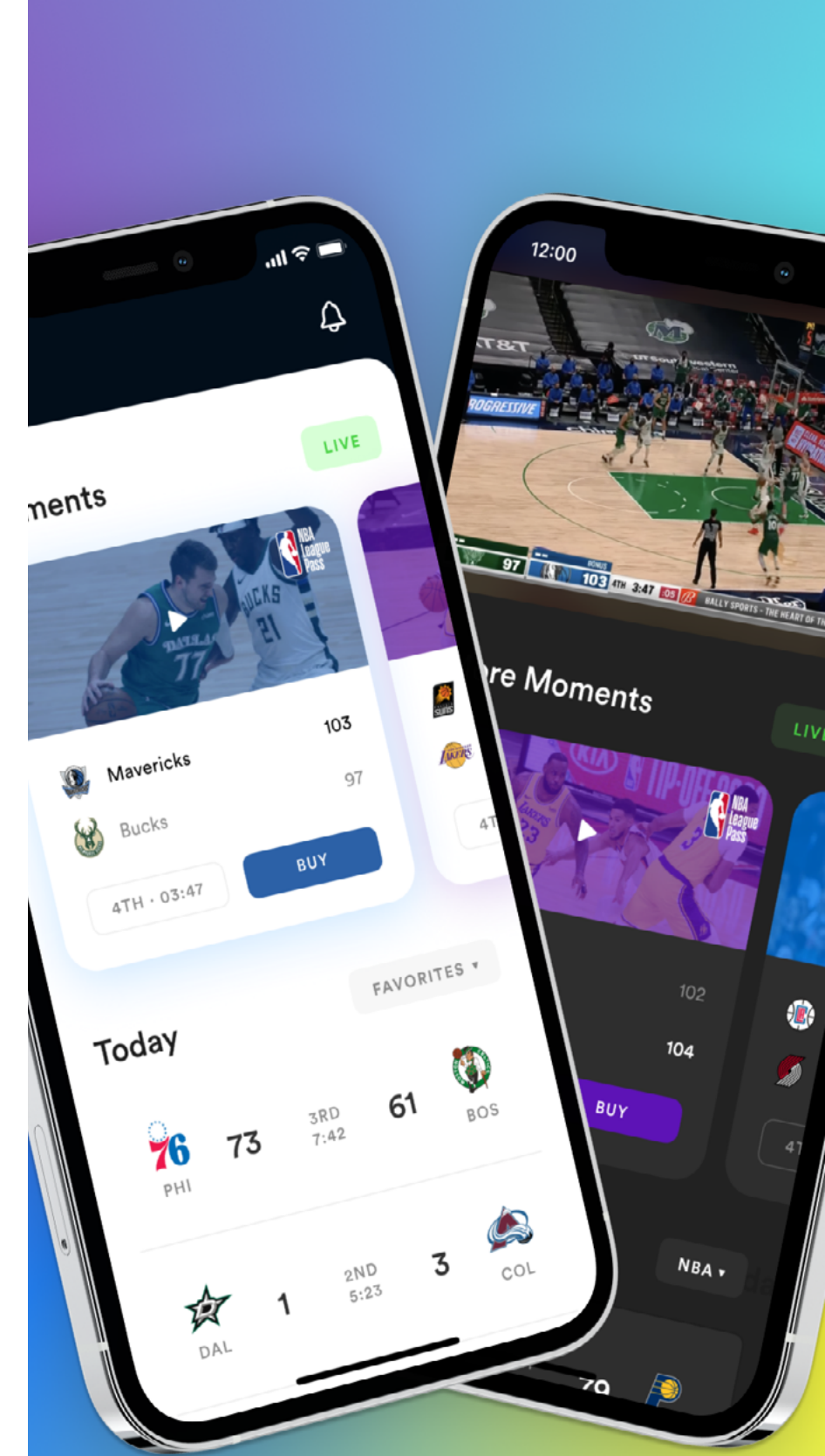
BUZZER

Program

Buzzer is a mobile platform for sports fans that provides access to live sports moments based on user preferences. The platform serves as a network for fans to build community and connect with a culture rooted in gratitude, empathy and inclusion. Additionally, Buzzer is dedicated to creating opportunities for people of color through its values, product and financial tools, including accessible and inclusive design and ensuring its products include features tailored to the deaf community and other underrepresented groups.

Insights

Buzzer made an early investment in culture, and it's influenced the company's product roadmap, partnerships and employee recruitment tactics. Buzzer also launched its Strive Impact Program to provide more opportunities for people of color via career-focused sessions with HBCU students and partnerships with InHerSight, WomenWhoCode, Werkzy and Colorwave to reach diverse talent.



Most Collaborative Culture

Sephora

SEPHORA

Program

Beauty product retailer Sephora makes business decisions around the values of teamwork, respect, passion, innovation, initiative, expertise and balance. These values have also anchored the company's recent collaborative programs to improve diversity, equity and inclusion. With a DE&I focus on both employees, consumers, the communities Sephora fosters are designed to create spaces and opportunities where all beauty is celebrated and respected.

Insights

Creating a collaborative culture leads to more inclusive business outcomes. Sephora has established an advisory group of individuals and social justice and civil rights organizations that help shape the retailer's equity work. The company has also launched 11 task forces to create an inclusive environment for employees and customers, and these also foster collaboration between company leaders throughout the organization. Additionally, the company's nine employee resource groups — known as SephoraN Communities — offer a supportive community network and a forum to discuss cultural differences and spotlight diverse voices and perspectives. This network, in turn, influences Sephora's business decisions to further promote inclusion.



Most Passionate Employees

Delta Dental of California



Program

Delta Dental of California uses the words trust, service, excellence and innovation to define the character of the company. The company's employees advocate for their communities and draw on their lived experiences to stand up for social good. Employees include an Army mom who has fundraised for Sneakers for Soldiers, a talent team leader who brings awareness to infertility and equity in fertility care and dental consultants taking action to highlight the lack of representation among people of color in dentistry during Black History Month.

Insights

Delta Dental of California employees continuously volunteer to help improve their communities and participate in the company's philanthropic initiatives. During the pandemic, employees volunteered nearly 6,000 hours and donated more than \$250,000 — with nearly \$300,000 in matching funds — going toward causes such as animal welfare, conservation and chronic diseases. Employees also assembled and helped distribute nearly 15,000 dental kits to people in need. Additionally, employees receive 16 hours of paid time off and \$1,000 in matching funds for their charitable donations every year.

“ Recruiting more African-Americans into the dental field is imperative as it would help to decrease health disparities and would also encourage other African-Americans to pursue careers in dentistry. ”

Erika Sibbie, DMD
Dental Consultant at Delta Dental



We asked members of Delta Dental's LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Community what significance [#PrideMonth](#) holds for them. Whether it was being themselves at work or supporting a queer friend, [#Pride](#) is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate our differences. 🌈💚

[#LifeatDDIns](#) [#diversityandinclusion](#) [#nationalselfieday](#)



Most Committed to Work/Life Balance

Iterable

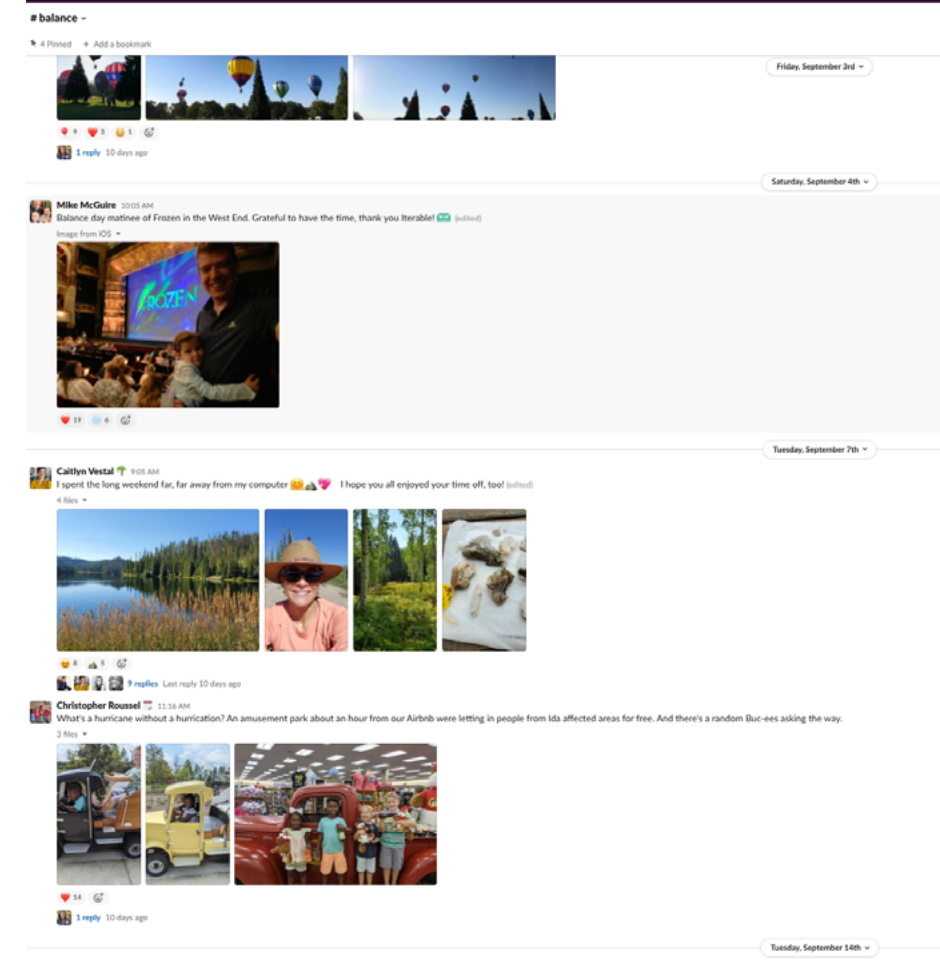
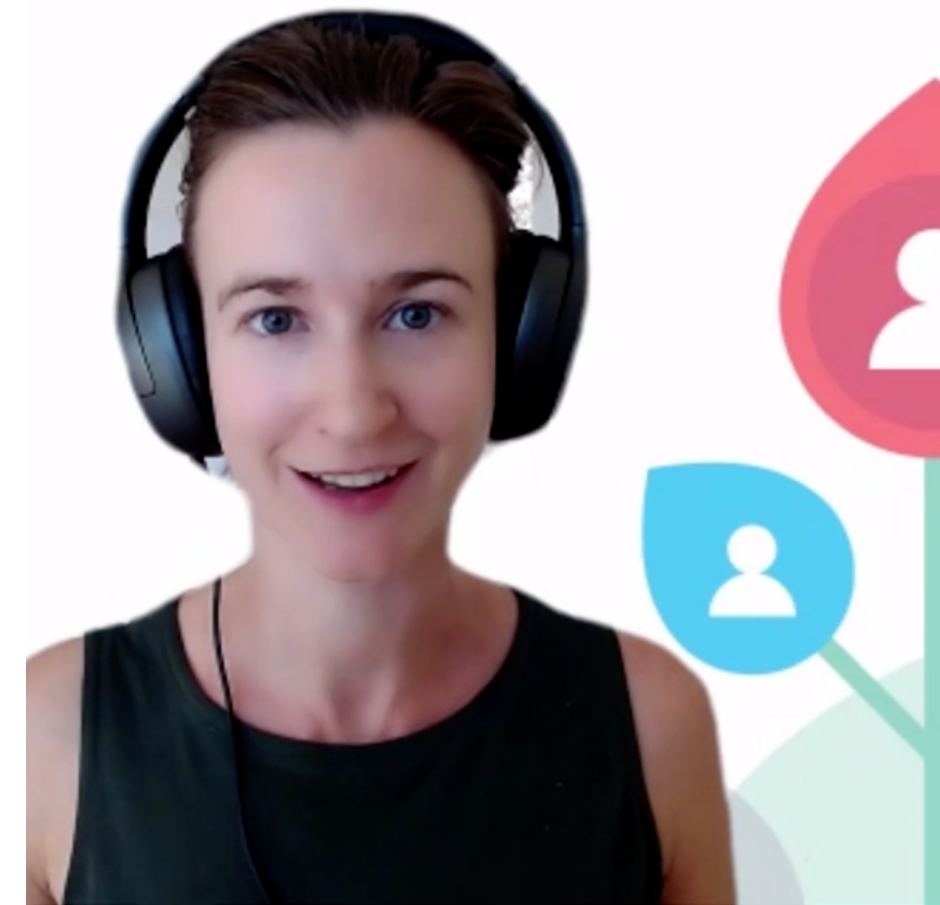


Program

Cross-channel marketing platform Iterable aims to enhance the relationships between brands and consumers through a strategy that begins with prioritizing the wellbeing of its employees. To accomplish this, the company provides employees a variety of offerings dedicated to maintaining their physical and mental health, as well as their overall work-life balance.

Insights

Iterable has numerous employee programs dedicated to improving wellness which, in turn, leads to happier employees and improved business performance. Programs include a monthly health and wellness stipend; the Char-iterable program, endorsing paid volunteer time off and matching employee donations; fertility and adoption assistance; paid sabbatical and unlimited personal time off and flexible working hours. The company also encourages employees to post what they do to relax and balance in a dedicated Slack channel, and also celebrates these actions during company town halls.



Best Employer for Remote Employees

Goodway Group

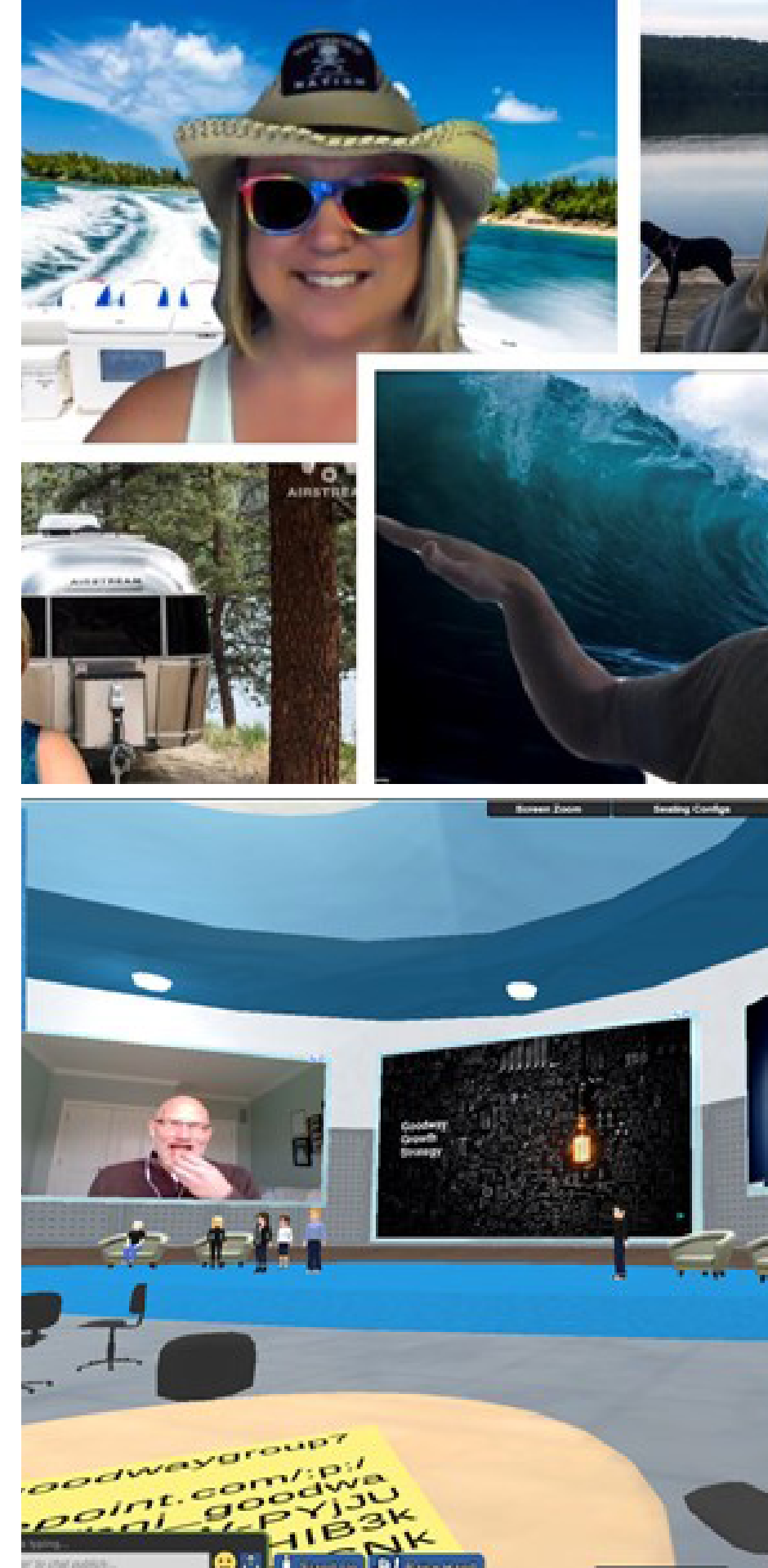


Program

Goodway Group, a programmatic partner for ad agencies, has operated with an exclusively remote workforce since 2006. Over the past 15 years, the company has built a resource library to help teams develop processes, build relationships and manage conflict remotely. One of Goodway Group's recent remote-friendly initiatives was the launch of a survey through Culture Amp, its platform used to house employee survey data. This platform will help the company better identify and prioritize employee needs and areas of improvement.

Insights

The pandemic has made it critical for companies to have an efficient and effective remote work environment to retain talent. Goodway Group's head start on remote work culture has allowed for more innovations, including the use of Virbela, a 2-D virtual reality platform that mimics the in-person event and meeting experience using personal avatars. The company also cancels all internal meetings once a month to recognize Dedicated Development Day (D3), which prioritizes employee growth and development through live, virtual learning sessions hosted by internal experts.



Best Employer for Parents

Vox Media

VOX MEDIA

Program

At Vox Media, the company's Parent Employee Resource Group has played a pivotal role in shaping a culture that understands the challenges of parenting — particularly while working from home. The ERG shares information and develops programs with executive sponsors President Pam Wasserstein and Jacqueline Cinguina, senior vice president of Marketing. Primary and secondary caregivers get 16 weeks of parental leave, plus unlimited PTO for pandemic-related childcare time. Vox has implemented breastfeeding spaces with hospital grade amenities and supporting services. The company's benefits offer unlimited fertility treatments. Programming includes sleep training and play workshops, plus children's yoga and storytelling activities.

Insights

Vox's leadership has clearly placed family at the center of its workplace policies, unlocking access and adding progressive programs to support intending and active parents. As a pathway to healthy, happy teams and a powerful message that will help attract new talent — and keep established talent in place — the formula for family is working at Vox Media.



Best Workplace for Young Careers

Direct Agents



Program

Direct Agents brings new talent to its teams via an associate program that jumpstarts and prepares candidates without digital marketing experience for a career in the industry. Working hands-on as a part of DA's campaigns, associates accumulate certifications and are prompted to explore cross-department experiences, helping to build career mobility into their outcomes. Direct Agents adds to the focus on growth across career stages with company-wide mentoring pods, coffee meetings, training opportunities and awards that not only recognize MVPs but also most-improved and up-and-coming employees.

Insights

Centralizing professional development has become a new-talent resource for Direct Agents, with more than 90% of its associate program participants earning a full-time offer at the end of their term. Beyond that, breaking down cross-departmental silos along the way with interactive and skills-building activities promotes choice and discovery as part of the workplace experience.

Welcome TO YOUR POD

An alternative to 1:1 mentorship, Pods will:

- Foster camaraderie in a diverse and collaborative team environment
- Provide group mentorship and guidance
- Facilitate cross channel learning opportunities

Pods will meet on a monthly basis for a "lunch and bond" session.

"It's the growth opportunity that I love most about Direct Agents. The entrepreneurial culture and open relationships with my managers/colleagues allowed me to forge my own path and grow in areas I'm most interested in. The ability to learn new things and push the limits of what we do on a day-to-day basis is not just encouraged, it's supported. The opportunities are endless!"

Jon Viano

Director of Client Solutions



Most Dedicated to Employee Growth

Audible

Program

Audible puts growth in the center of the conversation across several career stages. Its Future Leaders program offers high-school students paid internships to gain meaningful professional experience, then supports them at the next juncture with its Audible Scholars program, which offers participants additional aid and guaranteed jobs during school breaks. For mid-career professionals, the company's Next Chapter Returnship program supports mid-career professionals, offering hands-on training and mentoring programs for local individuals who have taken a year or more off from their careers, many for caregiving. Meanwhile, its Customer Care community recruiting strategy invests in job seekers prior to interviews, helping to boost their job readiness through workshops on skills like effective communications, critical thinking and time-management, along with resume reviews and mock interviews.

Insights

Audible knows its programs work because the numbers show the success. Since launch, 100% of Audible interns have been accepted to college, and graduates of this program now make up 10% of Audible's employees. Recently, Audible extended full-time offers to 80% of its inaugural Returnship cohort, with 100% of the offers accepted. Putting the lens on how people grow as professionals has allowed Audible to laser-focus on how it find the right people to work with at every stage of their careers.

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audible 

Most Dedicated to Employee Wellness

Canopy Management



Program

Canopy was already bringing a health-conscious approach to its team culture when its leadership saw and seized an opportunity to turn its exercise incentive program into humanitarian aid. In a winter when Texas experienced massive weather-related power failures, the Canopy crew turned their 'Max Out March' fitness competition into a fundraiser to put food on the table for affected residents in the state. Every hour of workout became a meal donation to Meals on Wheels in Texas. Meanwhile, on a daily basis as part of its Social Engagement and Employee Development program, Canopy takes a moment to recognize staff and their contributions — and an internal points system transforms that recognition into rewards such as swag, gift cards and even extra time off.

Insights

The standout effect of quantifying the practice of doing good while doing business put Canopy at the top of the judge's picks in 2021. The 'Max Out March' effort alone helped feed 1,254 homebound seniors during the Texas blackout. And Canopy's employees see the outcomes of their own work at the company in similarly measurable ways as the SEED program wraps performance with rewards and recognition.



Most Committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Klick Health

Program

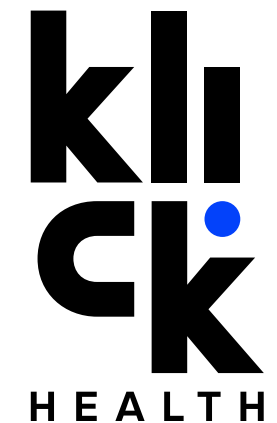
Klick Health promotes diversity, equity and inclusion via four companywide pillars — measurable goals, education, group support and talent management all the way up the pipeline to recruitment. Spearheaded by Amy Gómez, senior vice president of diversity strategy, Klick's DE&I initiatives included the company's first-ever diversity benchmarking survey in August 2021, along with a DE&I impact report. It's education curriculum has included speakers such as Ijeoma Oluo ('So You Want to Talk about Race'); Robin DiAngelo ('White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Race'), and Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of 'The 1619 Project.' Employee resource groups feature program themes such as Klicksters-of-Color, Women, Queer/LGBTQ+, Parents and Mental Health — and its talent pipeline includes training to mitigate interview bias and bolster inclusive advancement within the organization.

Insights

With household names powering Klick Health's DE&I programming and quantified outcomes such as issuing a 12-point CTA around operationalizing diversity, equity and inclusion within its walls and publishing the data its tracking internally, the evidence of commitment at the company is incontrovertible. Investing time and resources into material change and sharing the practices that have emerged as Klick Health did the work is what drove the judge's selection this year.

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Most Committed to the Community/Social Good

Next PR



Program

For a PR agency already offering a pro bono program it calls Conscious Capitalism, when the pandemic interrupted in-person volunteering, Next PR went into virtual overdrive, providing remote pro-bono PR services for more than a dozen organizations. The team launched fully integrated strategies including influencer and social-media outreach, as well as podcast development and animated video production services. Beneficiaries of the pro bono efforts included No More Secrets, an organization aiming to destigmatize periods and end period poverty for Black youth, and Mother Superior, a venture and social purpose foundry.

Insights

Next PR's volunteer public relations powered significant results in 2021, landing coverage for No More Secrets in all major Philadelphia regional media outlets, and tripling its initial fundraising goal. For Mother Superior, Next PR secured coverage in publications like Fast Company, Forbes and Crunchbase, helping the company provide access to capital and support for entrepreneurs left out of the traditional venture capital space. And its ongoing work goes further still — every team member gets 24 hours of paid volunteer time off annually. Commitment is measured by the work put into goals, and Next PR stood out for carving out the time, achieving the results and institutionalizing the approaches that are improving its community.



Best Onboarding Process

Klick Health



Program

Klick Health is a commercial partner laser-focused on developing, launching and supporting life science brands to maximize their full market potential. Pre-pandemic, they hosted onboarding at their Toronto office, flying in the newest “Klicksters” to introduce them to everything at the company before diving into more detail with their own teams. The company adjusted their onboarding strategy without losing their people-first philosophy by connecting new employees to their coworkers from the moment they accepted their new position and through adding them to the technology stack, like Donut and Slack, to get them excited for their new journey.

Insights

To set their new employees up for success, Klick Health injects connection, camaraderie, success and inclusion into their onboarding program. The new Klickster experience is curated to ensure seamless onboarding and updated to reflect the new virtual working environment. Once a new hire is offered their position, they are invited to join Klick Launchpad — a series of guided workflows and automated messages to support new employees. They’re assigned a peer buddy to answer their questions and provided with a journey map outlining what their first three months will look like to help manage expectations.



Pride @ Klick

LGBTQ Mental Health During the Coronavirus

A Diversity & Inclusion Pride Edition with Jan



Bruno
Planner, Guitar Player,
Bookworm, Klickster

HR Leader of the Year

Diane Kim, vice president of People, Prose

prose

Program

Diane Kim of Prose, a custom haircare company that designs products for the individual, has revolutionized the company's internal culture for all its employees. Her strong belief that people everywhere can serve as a force for change and equity in today's society led her to seek out opportunities to source candidates from a wider range of inclusive platforms to shift from the "culture-fit" approach to "culture-add." Diane has implemented a number of new initiatives and policies, such as unbiased interview training sessions and refined Prose's approach to equity to be one that is democratic and involves stakeholders in the design process.

Insights

Diane has accomplished a number of DE&I efforts within just one year, such as leading the establishment of Prose's DE&I council, made up of 10 members from all levels and all three office locations, launching a bi-annual DE&I survey and conducting a pay equity audit to mitigate any pay disparities and ensure all employees are compensated fairly. She also prioritized devoting \$50,000 toward the care and well-being of Black and BIPOC employees as well as developing a partnership with WITH, a wellness organization committed to centering the health and wellness of underrepresented employees.



Top Boss

Sabin Ephrem, CEO,
Horizontal Digital

**Hori—
zontal**
Digital

Program

Sabin has personally invested his financial, emotional and physical resources to bootstrap Horizontal Digital through lean times, never being too proud to take on hard work or contribute his own muscle to office build outs. When the pandemic struck, he even forewent his salary during the latter part of 2020 to avoid unnecessary layoffs. He also confidently empowered his team through the uncertain times to double down on flawlessly delivering for their new and existing customers. His steady leadership and unwavering vision led the team to unite while working remotely and see 9% year-over-year revenue growth amid a pandemic.

Insights

Over the past 18 years, Sabin has remained committed to building a company that reflects his own commitment to quality, diversity and to his vision, which are showcased in the exponential growth Horizontal Digital has achieved as well as the diversity of talent they've attracted. In 2020, Sabin spearheaded the creation of Horizontal Cares to make it easier for employees to donate their time and talent to the causes they care about. They also donated to international nonprofits to help some of the areas and groups hit hardest by the pandemic.



Employer of the Year

Havas New York

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Program

Havas NY is on a mission to make a meaningful difference to brands, businesses and people by fostering a culture of creativity, innovation and inclusion. CEO, Laura Maness, has focused on putting people first to re-energize employees and spark inspiration. To help combat burnout, she implemented a weekly Zoom Out calendar block, where employees are encouraged to deny requests for meetings and calls to reset, recharge and focus. The company also launched VTO days in 2021, granting employees additional PTO days for volunteering. They've partnered with numerous fitness brands to encourage overall employee wellness as well as created a Curious Fund where full-time employees receive an annual stipend to pursue a passion that feeds their soul.

Insights

The agency is leading the charge toward sustainability for the Havas network by working to secure a B Corp certification with the mission to support youth from underserved communities and to ensure all outputs have the most positive impact possible on the planet. To help this initiative, they reinvented their internship programs to welcome everyone regardless of age, background or location. These programs include courses on social justice, environmental practice and wellness partnerships, and attracted over 800 participants from 170 countries around the world.



Best Cultural Pivot to a Virtual Environment

Tapad, a part of Experian



Program

Tapad shifted their in-person events, Tappy Hours, game nights, cooking classes and trivia nights into virtual events, with the addition of virtual meditations, a diversity and inclusion speaker series and industry executive spotlights to keep employees informed and connected. They also utilized Bonus.ly for peer-to-peer recognition, which fostered friendly competition, and since the start of the work from home order has evolved into being about collaboration and bringing awareness to great work. Another function of Bonus.ly has been its massive forum that has allowed coworkers to discover connections they didn't know existed. The recognition of collaboration has been fundamental to keeping everyone engaged and excited for the future.

Insights

Tapad has always had employees located around the world and sought to make them all feel a part of the same team. With quarantines, they revamped their events to drive participation through differentiated virtual experiences and encouraged all employees to create events their colleagues would enjoy. Tapad also ensured their roadmap and vision were communicated clearly and regularly to all employees so they knew how they were contributing to the company's goals.

112 EMPLOYEES

INTERNATIONALLY



WE KICKED OFF

115 PROJECTS



Most Committed to Employee Appreciation

CMI Media Group and Compas

Program

CMI Media Group and Compas have a transparent culture where they collect and act on feedback from employees in a variety of ways. Many of their departments and offerings were created because someone approached leadership with an idea and had the support to move forward. They have implemented surprise mental health days for when employees need them the most to help them truly feel appreciated. They also have recognition systems such as employee of the month and a system for individuals to send recognition to their peers that they can turn into prizes.

Insights

CMI Media Group and Compas's open-door policy applies on both a professional and personal level, where the executive chairman sends wishes and a gift to each employee on their birthday as well as matching donations on several occasions for causes that employees are passionate about. They also share agency and employee wins during monthly meetings and have implemented virtual wellness events, such as yoga, kickboxing, bingo and themed Zoom parties to give employees some of the fun elements they may have missed while working remotely.

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About Digiday Awards

The Digiday Awards include 14 different programs yearly, with focuses on video, content marketing, media and technology, among others. Competitors' brands are placed in front of judging panels made up of C-Level leaders from leading organizations, and winners are featured in Digiday's media coverage, marketing, Awards Guides, livestream galas and other announcements. The Digiday Awards have recognized companies and campaigns since 2014.

For more information on this or other Digiday Awards programs, visit digiday.com/awards

Questions for the awards team? Let us know at

awards@digiday.com