

Workingmums.co.uk announces winners of 2014 Top Employer Awards

Submitted by: Working Mums

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Workingmums.co.uk has announced the winners of its fifth annual Top Employer Awards, celebrating the leading companies in gender diversity and flexible working.

The Awards, sponsored by McDonald's Restaurants Ltd, were presented at a ceremony at London's Soho Hotel on 4 November where the keynote speaker was Wendy Hallett, MBE, Founder and MD of Hallett Retail and a member of the Women's Business Council.

Winner of the Overall Top Employer award was McMillan Williams Solicitors. It is the first year an SME has won the Award. It was praised by the judges for the comprehensive range of support it offered, the breadth of the case studies it submitted and for the inspiration it offered others in the legal sector and beyond.

Awards were presented for eight other categories:

Top Employers Award for Innovation in Flexible Working (<http://www.workingmums.co.uk>) - sponsored by last year's winner Atkins - went to BAE Systems Maritime Naval Ships. The judges praised BAE Systems for taking action on flexible working in a very traditional, male-dominated sector.

The Top Employers Award for Career Progression, sponsored by last year's winner Royal Mail, went to AT Kearney Ltd. The judges praised the winner's exemplary Success with Flex programme for acknowledging there is no one-size-fits-all career path and working with staff on tailored career solutions that allow them to balance work with other commitments.

The Top Employers Award for Best for Dads, sponsored by IG Group, went to the London School of Economics and Political Science. The judges felt that the winner was committed to innovating in this area and had clearly grasped the wider benefits of doing so. Its research leave policy, which enables academic staff members to re-establish their research trajectory following a long period of absence, was highly praised as a model for other academic institutions.

The Top Employers Award for Talent Attraction, sponsored by CA Technologies, went to Reality HR Ltd. The judges praised the winner for the impact it was having externally as well as internally through the encouragement it gives to its clients to consider flexible workers.

Winner of the Top Employers Award for Family Support, sponsored by MamBabyBliss Ltd, went to Bank of America Merrill Lynch. The judges felt the winner provided a comprehensive package of support, including back-up care, maternity coaching, quarterly webinars and a programme for dads.

The Top Employers Award for SMEs with 1-25 employees, sponsored by WM Recruit (<http://www.wmrecruit.co.uk>), went to Hireserve Ltd. The judges praised the winner for a strong entry which showed how it had grown the business using a flexible model. Hireserve has previously won a Top Employer Award and the judges felt its entry showed that it had continued to build on a deeply ingrained flexible model.

Top Employers Award for SMEs with over 26-250 employees, also sponsored by WM Recruit, went to McMillan

Williams Solicitors. The judges praised the winner's strong diversity record which was clearly supported by the senior management team. The judges were impressed to see a law firm and SME of this size offering such care and support to its staff and recognising the sound business reasons for doing so.

The Working Mums Champion Award, sponsored by Arise Virtual Solutions, went to Adeline Ginn of Women in Rail. The judges were highly impressed by the work and passion evidenced in Adeline Ginn's work for Women in Rail, a sector where there were significant challenges for flexible working and female career progression. She was not only doing her day job, but attempting to change an entire industry, not just a company.

The Award judges were: Gillian Nissim, Founder of Workingmums.co.uk; Andy Lake, editor of Flexibility.co.uk; Jennifer Liston-Smith, Director of Coaching & Consultancy at My Family Care; Dave Dunbar, Head of BT Flexible Working Services; and Clare Kelliher, Professor of Work and Organisation at Cranfield School of Management.

The judges took part in a lively Q & A Panel, which was sponsored by BAE Systems. There was also a networking session, sponsored by Unilever, where winners and shortlisted entrants were able to swap ideas.

Gillian Nissim, Founder of Workingmums.co.uk (<http://www.workingmums.co.uk>), said: "This is the fifth year for our Top Employer Awards and once again we have been really impressed by the kind of work being done by the shortlisted organisations and by the range of sectors they represent. As with previous years, this made for some really difficult decisions during the judging process, but it is a challenge we welcome. We are delighted that this year's winner is an SME and in a sector renowned for a traditionally male-dominated, long hours culture. This shows that all businesses can benefit from a more family friendly approach which values the contribution of all employees."

*For information on the organisations which were shortlisted for the Awards, click here (<http://www.workingmums.co.uk/working-mums-magazine/hot-topics/8086322/workingmumscouk-announces-shortlist-for-its-2>)

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Notes to editors:

*Workingmums.co.uk is the number one jobs and community site for professional working mothers. It has over 320,000 registered users and works with thousands of employers. It also has Franchise and Business Zones with advice, support and inspiration for those women who are thinking of setting up their own businesses.