

Workingmums.co.uk announces winners of its Top Franchise Awards 2017

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Creative kids franchise ARTventurers was named Overall Top Franchise at Workingmums.co.uk's first Top Franchise Awards (<https://www.workingmums.co.uk/top-franchise-awards/>) this week.

The Awards, sponsored by HSBC, celebrate the best family friendly franchisors and franchisees. They recognise franchisors both big and small who have empowered women in business – not only by providing a successful flexible business model, but by giving franchisees the advice and support they need to succeed.

Twenty-three franchises and 30 franchisees were shortlisted for six categories and the top franchise award was chosen from the winners of each of these. ARTventurers was named Overall Top Franchise with the judges saying it had created a family friendly, supportive business model and had not only won one award, but had performed strongly across all the categories it had entered. The judges praised its support for maternity leave, which was something many self employed women struggle with and said they felt other franchises could learn from the kind of engaged, flexible business model it offered.

The awards were judged by Kendall Braddock, Franchise Director of HSBC Bank plc, franchise law expert Amy Leite, Senior Associate at Pinney Talfourd LLP Solicitors, Griselda Togobo, Managing Director of Forward Ladies who are partners for the Awards, and Gillian Nissim, Founder of Workingmums.co.uk.

The online ceremony on Tuesday included an awards presentation and a Q&A session with franchising experts.

The winners of the six award categories were:

Supportive Franchisor Award – ARTventurers. The franchise was praised for the clear sense of commitment from the franchisor to their franchisees and the comprehensive support it offered, including HR support, maternity support and the flexibility it offered from day one. The judges were impressed by the comprehensive training offering and the franchise's marketing mentoring programme, ongoing mentoring initiative and support for business development. They felt communications with franchisees, including bi-monthly team webinars, showed that the franchisor had carefully considered what franchisees might need to create a successful business.

Family Friendly Franchise Award – Lingotot. The judges said it presented a strong case for family friendly working. It offered flexibility across the board from head office staff to franchisees, tailored training and ongoing support at times which were convenient for parents, held regular family fun days and offered emergency support. They felt the franchisor had clearly lived the work life juggle, felt passionately about providing a family friendly business model and had looked at all aspects of the business to ensure this was what she was offering.

The Franchise Award for Innovation – Bluebird Care. The judges felt Bluebird presented a gold standard for other franchises. They were leaders in their industry in terms of their investment in technology to support franchisees and the elderly people they were caring for. It was both innovative in a business

and social sense and its innovations could be adapted by franchisors across the board.

Best Newcomer Award – Little Learners. The judges said it was well thought through, flexible, ambitious, offered ongoing support and different income streams and was strongly driven by the personal experience and passion of the franchisor. It offered a flexible, family friendly model which laid a big emphasis on the business' sustainability.

Franchisee of the Year Award – Abigail Curtis from Lingotot Teesside who has built her languages franchise while working part time as a mechanical engineer and despite not speaking Spanish or French or having any teaching experience. Abigail has been the top-performing Lingotot franchisee every year since 2013, works with over 3,000 children and is now a mentor for other Lingotot franchisees. The award was voted for by over 4,500 members of the public.

Gillian Nissim, founder of Workingmums.co.uk, said: "We are delighted at the very high standard of entries in our second Top Franchise Awards. I would like to congratulate all our winners and shortlisted franchises and franchisees. The Top Franchise Awards perfectly complement our Top Employer Awards by highlighting flexible, supportive business models which allow those with caring needs to fulfill their potential. We believe they act as a beacon for others looking to develop flexible business models."

Andrew Brattesani, UK Head of Franchising at HSBC, said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring the Workingmums.co.uk Top Franchise Awards and to support innovative family friendly franchises. HSBC has over 25 years' experience in the franchise industry. Franchises offer the flexibility of self employment combined with a tried and tested business model. We hope that the Awards will provide a wealth of ideas and inspiration for all those looking to a future in franchising."

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