2023 BEST Awards Application Overview

**Application Instructions**

The online awards portal will open on **August 8, 2022**. Entrants do not need to be ATD members to apply. It can be accessed here:

<https://atdbest.secure-platform.com/a/solicitations/login/32>

1. **Applications are due on November 1, 2022.**
2. The early-bird entry fee is $200 USD if submitted by October 14. Regular rate is $225 through November 1. *It is payable as the last step* in submitting your application online. Payment is by credit card only.
3. The BEST application is a **blind application**. This means your entry form should contain NO mention of the company name or any identifying programs, people, or achievements. Applications that fail to meet these criteria may be disqualified.
4. Organization name and other information will be collected separately.
5. Most answers have word limits. These are hard-coded into the form and cannot be exceeded.
6. Ensure **no company-identifying information** appears in any supporting documents or graphics you may upload. This includes the file name of the supporting document.
7. Words included in uploaded documents do not count toward the total word count for the answer.
8. **Do not include** an appendix, addendum, or any supplemental documents with your application beyond the optional uploads noted in the application. Uploads should be limited to 1-2 pages per upload.
9. **Video links or links to outside websites are not allowed**.
10. Twelve-month reporting timeframe should be approximately from July 2021 – July 2022.

Disqualified applications are not eligible for a refund of the application fee.

2023 BEST Awards Entry Form

(You will be asked for your company name when you submit this information to the online portal. Please enter it. It will not be visible to reviewers.)

**Section A: Scope and Role of the Talent Development Function**

Note: When thinking about the entirety of talent development, keep in mind the [ATD Capability Model](https://www.td.org/capability-model).

1. What is the **title** of the senior executive who has responsibility for enterprise-wide learning, knowledge management, or other talent development functions? (Do NOT include the person’s name.)
2. Describe the organization’s talent strategy and how it supports the overall business strategy. What specific actions does the organization take to ensure alignment of talent strategy with overall strategy? (i.e. Why does it matter to the business?) (500 words)
3. Explain how c-level and senior leaders support learning in the organization. (500 words)
4. Describe what members of the talent development team do to ensure their skills are up to date? What type of professional development support does the TD team receive? (250 words)

**Section B: Strategic Use and Impact of the Talent Development Function**

1. Identify THREE critical business issues facing the organization and describe how talent development efforts helped to solve or address these issues. (500 words)
2. Choose two of the below actions that your talent development function has taken in the last twelve (12) months and explain how it has helped the organization reach its goals. (300 words)

* Compare the costs and benefits of a learning program
* Determine success in connecting talent development and organizational performance
* Determine success in accomplishing employee performance objectives
* Quantify the effect of specific training program(s) on business during or after the program
* Forecast the impact of specific training program(s) on business before the program is launched
* Identify strengths and weaknesses in the post-training process
* Strengthen connection between talent development and enterprise performance
* Other (please describe below)

1. In the current climate, what innovative talent development practices have you implemented or how have you pivoted to adjust to challenges brought on by Covid-19 and/or other current events, changes in technology, changes in culture, or changes in the labor market? (500 words)
2. How does the organization identify skills gaps? What are the three most pressing skills gaps right now for your organization and what is being done to close these gaps? (250 words)

8b. How is the talent development team working to prepare employees for the future of work? In other words, how are you assessing the skills employees will need in the future (as a result of technological or other changes) and/or upskilling/reskilling employees to meet these needs? (250 words)

**SECTION C: Evidence That Developing and Managing Talent Is Valued in the Organizational Culture**

1. Organizations provide development opportunities through different channels and practices. How are modalities for formal learning determined for a program? (e.g. instructor-led workshops, online courses, virtual learning, or technology based, formal coaching/mentoring programs, apprenticeships, tuition reimbursement, et) What factors are considered? (300 words)
2. Describe the organization’s most successful [on-the-job training](https://www.td.org/books/learning-while-working) initiative. Be sure to include any results it achieved. (250 words) | Definition: **OJT** (On-the-Job Training), one of the oldest forms of training, is a delivery system that dispenses training to employees as they need it.
3. How does the talent development function support and reflect the organization’s culture? (250 words)
4. To what degree can individuals access or provide input regarding their own learning plans? (i.e. Can learners create their own learning pathways?) Are learning offerings connected or curated in progressive series, paths, or curricula, and if so, how are learners rewarded for completing these (e.g. internal certifications, recognition, or promotion consideration)? Please explain. (500 words)
5. Describe your organization’s succession planning strategy. (500 words)

*Consider the following employee groups:*

* CEO
* C-Level
* Senior Leaders
* Mid-level managers
* Critical individual contributors (e.g. technical/organizational knowledge)

1. What performance management practices do you use? (Select all that apply.)

* Annual performance reviews
* Periodic performance discussions at least quarterly
* Documentation of individual competencies
* Individual development plans
* Employee participation in performance goal setting and self-review
* Peer review of performance or 360-degree feedback systems
* Tracking of employee learning history
* Performance improvement plans or formal programs (e.g., remedial coaching programs) to address low performers
* Tying salary increases, promotions, and/or rewards to high performance ratings
* Other (please describe below)

1. What new or innovative talent management initiatives have you implemented in the last twelve (12) months? (500 words)

*This question seeks to specifically address talent management initiatives as an aspect of talent development as a whole.*| **Definition: Talent Strategy and Management** are the practices used to build an organization's culture, engagement, capability, and capacity through the implementation and integration of talent acquisition, employee development, retention, and deployment processes, ensuring these processes are aligned to organizational goals. See ATD's [Glossary of Terms](https://www.td.org/glossary-terms).

**SECTION D: Evidence of a Link between Talent Development and Performance**

1. Which of the following metrics does the enterprise use to measure its performance? (Select all that apply.)

* Ability to retain essential employees
* Customer satisfaction
* Cycle time reduction or improvement
* Employee satisfaction
* Market share/market expansion
* Overall profitability or progress toward mission
* Productivity improvement
* Quality of products/services
* Risk reduction or reduction in adverse events
* Sales/revenues
* Other (please describe below)

1. From the list above, select TWO (2) items and explain HOW talent development initiatives contributed to results achieved in the last twelve (12) months. For EACH of the items selected, indicate beginning and ending metrics in the 12-month span. (500 words)

17b. \*OPTIONAL\* You may upload a single chart or one-page graphic that visualizes your answer to the above question. (Be sure it does not include any company-identifying information.)

**Section E: Evidence of Effective Measurement and Evaluation**

1. Which of the following metrics are used to rate the efficiency of your talent development function? (Select all that apply.)

* Content development costs
* Content development cycle time
* Cost savings realized through outsourcing
* Cost savings realized through use of technology
* Learning hours delivered
* Lost work time for employees due to attending training
* Number of employees trained
* Time to deploy a new learning initiative
* Time to employee readiness or competence
* Timely completion of training required by law or outside body
* Travel and accommodation costs
* Whether courses are full or there are “empty seats”
* What percent of eligible employees participate in optional trainings
* Other (please describe below)

1. From the list above, select TWO (2) metrics you use and describe the efficiencies and cost-effectiveness gained in the past twelve (12) months. For each of the items selected, indicate your starting and ending metrics for the past twelve 12 months. (500 words)

19b. \*OPTIONAL\* You may upload a single chart or one-page graphic that visualizes your answer to the above question. (Be sure it does not include any company-identifying information.)

1. What percentage of the programs in your total portfolio of talent development programs are evaluated?
2. For what percentage of your talent development programs (holistically) do you take pre-event measurements to establish a baseline?

21b. for what percentage of your talent development programs do you take post-event measurements three, six, twelve, or more months later?

21c. Describe any changes your organization made in the measurement and evaluation of your talent development programs to accommodate any shifts from in-person to virtual training environments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. What data sources do you use to collect evaluation data? Business data from the organization or individual units (e.g. financials, annual reports, and sales reports) (Select all that apply.)

* Emailed survey (not online)
* In-person interviews with employees
* In-person interviews with managers
* Online or networked surveys
* Our LMS collects data
* Paper surveys
* Performance review data
* Results of reviews or audits by government or outside body
* Publicly available customer/employee feedback (e.g. Yelp, Glassdoor, JD Power ratings, “best places to work” awards)
* Other (please describe below)
* None

**SECTION F: Talent Development Support**

1. Provide an endorsement for talent development from CEO/COO (Do NOT use the person’s name, just title).
2. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) talent development staff.

*Includes CLO/CTDO, Learning/Training Managers, Administrative Staff, Designers, Developers, Evaluators, Performance Improvement Specialists. If this application is for a division or business unit, include only the number of staff working on behalf of that division/unit.*

24b. Number of employees served by FTE talent development staff.

1. Average number of formal learning hours used per year per employee.

*Formal learning hours are stand-alone learning hours that are NOT embedded in work or work processes (they do NOT include on-the-job learning hours). Formal learning hours may be used in-person or with the aid of technology.*

25b. What is the direct learning expenditure per employee? | Direct learning expenditure includes all spending on: internally-provided learning (including talent development staff salaries), learning suppliers, and tuition reimbursements.

1. (Not scored) Please provide a 2-3 sentence description/synopsis of what stands out to you the most about your organization’s talent development practices over the past year.