

2020



Winners

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Organization Nominations

Best Onboarding Program - Humorous Beginnings Award

For the organization that shows a commitment to bringing in new employees in a way that is effective, engaging, and fun.

Organization: BazaarVoice (www.bazaarvoice.com)

Onboarding: Scavenger hunt ([source](#))

Bazaarvoice is a digital marketing company that provides software that allows retailers to add customer reviews to their websites, based in Austin, USA.

Bazaarvoice makes their onboarding experience fun through a one-week scavenger hunt, giving new hires a well-rounded look at the company's structure, history, and culture. Tasks include exploring the various departments intranets and job descriptions, interviewing past winners of the company's achievement awards, and getting an all-access tour of the office. New hires also get a cool t-shirt to commemorate completion of the scavenger hunt.

Organization: Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com)

Onboarding: Trivia nights ([source](#))

Glassdoor is a website where current and former employees anonymously review companies, based in Mill Valley, USA.

Glassdoor has an inclusive onboarding tradition where they host trivia nights and ask new hires to submit their interests. These company game nights are quarterly and encourage bonding between new hires and current employees. It's a communal and gamified way to integrate the new team members and learn more about their passions, expertise and random interesting factoids that new hires bring to the table (like, country capitals and artists from the 1800s).

Organization: Warby Parker (www.warbyparker.com)

Onboarding: Lunch roulette ([source](#))

Warby Parker is an online retailer of prescription glasses and sunglasses, based in New York City, USA.

Warby Parker has a unique onboarding experience called lunch roulette, where new hires are randomly selected to go to lunch with other employees on the company's tab. The app ensures that new hires meet people from different departments on a weekly basis, to encourage them to learn about different parts of the organization. It also gives new hires clear direction (ie eat lunch with person A at this location) during what can be a nerve-wracking and indecisive first few weeks on the job.

WINNER: Glassdoor

We love Glassdoor's new employee trivia night because it integrates new hires in a fun way. The trivia nights are above and beyond your standard onboarding and playing with your coworkers relieves the stress of meeting new people and networking in a new role.

What the judges liked about this:

"I had heard of other companies doing scavenger hunts and even worked for a company that did the lunch date thing, but I thought the trivia night thing was more fun and creative!"

"Fun activity based on input from the people participating"

Best Training Program - Learned Me Good Award

For the organization that is committed to developing their people with skills they can use at work and in life.

Organization: The Game Agency (www.thegameagency.com)

Training: Training video games ([source](#))

The Game Agency is a digital products company that provides companies with training solutions that utilize games, contests, and loyalty programs, based in Stamford, USA.

The Game Agency creates customized training video games for companies and schools, that connect what you have to learn with something fun. They help their clients brainstorm and create fresh content, which helps their clients' audiences remember the training for longer. For example, the Game Agency has a specific STEM concepts basketball free throws training product for Grade 6 and 7 students.

Organization: Slack (www.slack.com)

Training: Perform a task in character ([source](#))

Slack is a business communication and messaging company, based in San Francisco, USA.

Slack runs a 'choose your own adventure' esque certification training program, inspired by children's books. Employees select a character, read over the fictional person's role and job duties, jump into the Slack messaging app and are asked to perform a task (in character). Employees can interact with a chatbot (still, in character) if they have any questions. The training is designed to give employees a safe environment to make good and bad choices, and see what happens.

Organization: HubSpot (www.hubspot.com)

Training: Email Templates with GIFs ([source](#))

HubSpot is a digital company focusing on inbound marketing, sales and CRM (customer relationship management) software, based in Cambridge, USA.

HubSpot's sales leadership training incorporates email templates with a twist. The leadership team shares outbound email templates that have humorous memes and gifs with sales employees, as a way to make the sales training more enjoyable and so sales employees feel the psychological safety and inspiration to do the same when reaching out to leads and clients. The idea is to foster a creative work environment where employees feel they can share joy from their personal life.

WINNER: Slack

We love Slack's approach to training because it gives employees the freedom to explore and learn new things through different lenses. The 'choose your own adventure' tasks are educational and entertaining.

What the judges liked about this:

"The idea of employees getting a safe place to be a little silly by assuming a character but also to make good and bad decisions/mistakes in a fun way is brilliant!"

"I love how thoughtful Slack is about training. They really walk the talk by connecting employees with all of their features. Also, storytelling is a powerful way to share and retain information. It's really cool that learners get to become the hero of their own Slack story!"

Best Marketing – The Funny Voice Award

For the organization that effectively uses humor as part of their branding, marketing, and communication with their customers.

Organization: Getty Museum (www.getty.edu/museum)

Marketing: *Recreate Art at Home* ([source](#))

The Getty Museum is an art museum, based in Los Angeles, USA.

The museum has been impressing many with their recent Twitter moves, as they started a public challenge to recreate works of art with objects (and people) from home. Many art enthusiasts have sent in pictures of recreating paintings with everyday clothing and taking this opportunity to put their glowing faces onto famous historical canvasses. This marketing has kept people and art lovers connected to the museum even when they can't attend in person, and inspired people to make more Art at home.

Organization: Justin's Nut Butter (www.justins.com)

Marketing: *Product Label with Truth* ([source](#))

Justin's Nut Butter is a food company that makes natural nut butters and organic chocolate peanut butter cups, based in Boulder, USA.

Justin's Nut Butter started after Justin's hungry roommates kept stealing his tasty creations, forcing him to write his name on the jar (the first product label). Since then, Justin's has been known for clever and witty marketing on their product labels. On this specific label, Justin shows his skill of picking names, and the marketing brings a smile to customers' and parents' faces as they enjoy the product.

Organization: Ohio Department of Health (www.odh.ohio.gov)

Marketing: *Social distancing via Ping Pong* ([source](#))

The Ohio department of Health administers and coordinates public health activities for families in the state of Ohio, USA.

The health department created a video with ping pong balls and mousetraps to display the power of social distancing to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. The video is effective marketing because it's visually appealing, to-the-point and uses humor by association. After watching the video, people quickly understand the need to socially distance, and will subconsciously associate and think of social distancing the next time they see a ping pong ball.

WINNER: Getty Museum

We love how the Getty Museum is keeping Art enthusiasts connected and sparking creativity and joy at home. The Getty Museum's Marketing lights up your day and has gotten people talking!

What the judges liked about this:

"I really like the Getty Museum because they were able to get so many people to participate in their tomfoolery."

"Getty tops it because it encourages humorous engagement."

Best Perk - Money Isn't Everything Award

For the organization that understands that engagement requires more than just a paycheck and that their employees are humans, not resources.

Organization: New Belgium Brewing Company (www.newbelgium.com)

Perk: Trip to Belgium breweries ([source](#))

New Belgium Brewing company is a craft beer brewer, based in Fort Collins, USA.

New Belgium Brewing started after the founder's 1989 bike trip through Belgium. His journey through the beer-loving European villages inspired him so much that he decided to make sure all employees could share the experience. When brewery employees make it to year five, they get a paid trip to Belgium. The brewery recognizes the employees with an awesome experience and the employees get to soak up traditional beer brewing culture.

Organization: Smule (www.smule.com)

Perk: BYO instrument to office ([source](#))

Smule is a social singing app that lets users enjoy millions of karaoke songs, based in San Francisco, California.

At Smule, employees can bring their instruments to the office for the company's weekly jam sessions. There are also various holiday parties involving employees' musical talents, like a Halloween costume party and Thanksgiving lunch. This perk helps develop a strong sense of belonging for employees from diverse backgrounds and brings people together using the universal language of music.

Organization: Omelet Ad Agency (www.omelet.com)

Perk: Work on Passion project ([source](#))

Omelet is an advertising agency, based in Los Angeles, USA.

Omelet's 60/60 program rewards employees by giving them 2 hours per workweek to work on a passion project. This project does not have to be work related, and does not have to be profitable. It can be anything the employee finds fulfilling. This program has been found to promote employee engagement and retention, and spark interesting conversations in the office.

WINNER: New Belgium Brewing Company

We love how the New Belgium Brewing Company incorporates traditional beer brewing culture and history into their employee perks. The Brewing Company is leading by example in an exciting way. We're always in for a trip to Europe with delicious drinks.

What the judges liked about this:

"I mean, it's a trip to Belgium"

"What better way to share your history and culture with an international workforce than to bring them to Belgium to share a beer."

Best Recognition Program - Better Recognize Award

For the organization that understands that a job well done deserves some attention, to both honor the employee and showcase the values the organization strives for.

Organization: Boston Red Sox - via Some Good News (www.mlb.com/redsox)

Recognition: 4 tickets for life ([source](#))

The Boston Red Sox are a professional baseball organization, based in Boston, USA. Some Good News is a Youtube show created by actor John Krasinski in March 2020.

John Krasinski recognized the hardworking medical staff at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre with 4 tickets for life to the Boston Red Sox baseball games. John, a fellow Boston native, surprised the medical staff on an episode of Some Good News and the tickets were presented to them via a personalized live video from Boston hero and baseball legend David Ortiz.

Organization: Scopely (www.scopely.com)

Recognition: Personalized oil paintings ([source](#))

Scopely is an interactive entertainment company and mobile games developer, based in Los Angeles, USA.

Scopely has a unique take on employee recognition. Scopely rewards high performing employees with a trophy, prime parking real-estate and shout-outs on social media. The company goes above and beyond for work anniversaries, as they immortalize their employees in an oil painting and offer custom-made samurai swords. This is a memorable and smart perk, because it gives employees a personal reward they're likely to talk about (and never forget), and does right by them at the time employees are statistically most likely to change jobs (their one year anniversary and each anniversary after that).

Organization: Blueboard (www.blueboard.com)

Recognition: Customized travel experiences ([source](#))

Blueboard is an employee recognition and incentives platform powered by hand-curated experiences (both in-home, and out in the world), based in San Francisco, USA

Blueboard has an inventory of employee recognition experiences that make it easy for companies to give meaningful recognition to their employees. Blueboard focuses on experiences rather than things, and allows companies to personalize their recognition per employee. Their experiences range from everyday events like a spa day to once-in-a-lifetime events like running with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain. Employees get to indulge in a passion or check something off their bucket list, and they have their company to thank for it.

WINNER: Scopely

We love Scopely's creativity in recognizing work anniversaries. Recognition is important at all levels of an organization, and Scopely does an awesome job in making everyone feel like they are part of the team and that each and every employee deserves (and can receive) a personalized oil painting and samurai sword.

What the judges liked about this:

"A freaking oil painting and samurai sword? Are you kidding me? No brainer."

"The paintings are so creative and more doable for companies on a smaller scale"

"I like personalized acts of appreciation. I LOVE wild and outrageously personalized acts of appreciation. Scopely has found a way to fit home decor and personalized weapons into their recognition plan. Kudos to them!"

Individual Nominations

Works with a Smile Award (Humor and Execution)

For the individual who uses humor to increase productivity, relieve stress, and get more done.

Individual: Owain Wyn Evans ([source](#))

Organization: BBC News

This weather person made the most of working from home, by playing the BBC musical interlude after his segment. He showed that he is a talented journalist and musician, and illustrated how you can be productive, relieve stress and enjoy your work all at the same time.

Individual: Sarah Hoggan ([source](#))

Organization: California Veterinary Specialists

Even when times are "ruff," Veterinarian Sarah Hoggan is paws-down a leader of the pack when it comes to getting tails to wag (both literally and figuratively). Sarah is an emergency veterinarian who uses humor and positivity to prevent burnout.

Individual: Heidi Hanna ([source](#))

Organization: The Stress Detective

Stress expert Heidi Hanna teaches how to lead with laughter when facing challenges and needing to recharge. Heidi has hosted many free virtual webinars to share her message of positivity and uses humor to provide motivation.

WINNER: Heidi Hanna

We love Heidi's approach to life and challenging times. It's all about seeing humor and finding joy in the everyday.

What the judges liked about this:

"I've seen first hand the scope and impact of Heidi Hanna's work. Global impact."

"Heidi Hanna is always incorporating humor into stress relief and execution. The drummer guy was awesome, that's just one thing though, versus Heidi's everyday execution"

Funny Innovator Award (Humor and Thinking)

For the individual who uses humor to enhance problem solving, improve creatively, and think outside the box.

Individual: Philipp Klein Herrero ([source](#))

Organization: Youtube @philippklein

Who says you can't ski at home? This outdoor enthusiast continues to ski indoors and creates a fun video to share his thinking with the world. Philipp uses humor to increase the acceptance of new ideas, that it is possible to exercise indoors.

Individual: Aaron Smith ([source](#))

Organization: Singularity Dating App

This man is statistically hoping to meet "the one" after creating a dating App with only one guy available - him. "Singularity saves you countless hours of swiping," says Aaron Smith, 31, "by just matching you with me!" He is using humor to trigger new connections, literally.

Individual: Shawn Williams ([source](#))

Organization: Shwnwllms reddit user

A guy is tasked with measuring trees in his yard. He effectively uses his body to enhance his ability to solve problems and make this task more enjoyable.

WINNER: Aaron Smith

We love the courage of creating a Singular Dating app. Effectively using humor to be memorable.

What the judges liked about this:

"Humor to solve a problem no one else thought of"

"Aaron! OMG! Those poor ladies. It's a genius plan though so it gets my vote."

Mark as Always Read Award (Humor and Communication)

For the individual who uses humor as a way to improve communication skills.

Individual: Jacinda Ardern ([source](#))

Organization: Prime Minister of New Zealand

Prime Minister Jacinda reassures the children of New Zealand that the tooth fairy and easter bunny are essential workers and are still working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Her and her team make a concerted effort to find the positives and add some levity to the government policy communications.

Individual: Randall Munroe ([source](#))

Organization: XKCD

Randall improves the understanding of Pathogen Resistance with this great cartoon. He uses fun drawings and illustrations to assist in learning, make a difficult scientific topic easier to digest and make his message more memorable.

Individual: Daughter of Brian Altano ([source](#))

Organization: IGN

"You're never too young to be a Star Wars fan". Brian Altano's 20-month old daughter shows her creative way to say and remember Star Wars characters' names. Her use of humor is so effective (and cute) that it got actor Mark Hamill (ie the original Goop Skywalker) to listen.

WINNER: Jacinda Ardern

We love Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's kindness and positive communication style during a stressful and challenging time. Jacinda is truly a strong and compassionate leader, and demonstrates how you can take your work seriously and communicate your work in a playful way.

What the judges liked about this:

"It's not easy to pull off humor as a public official during a crisis. It's easy to use it poorly, have bad timing, etc but Jacinda Arden nailed it and also used it to lift others' spirits."

"The tooth fairy and easter bunny might be essential in New Zealand, but here in the great state of Texas I had to hide my own eggs and fork out my own dollars this season! All kidding aside, I voted for this one because there's so much negative information circulating, and it's important to remember that children pay attention, and they need hope too."

Everybody Loves Them Award (Humor and Connection)

For the individual who uses humor to build relationships with coworkers, clients, and everyone in between.

Individual: Steve Breen ([source](#))

Organization: San Diego Union Tribune

Cartoonist Steve Breen created a sweet tribute to NASA astronaut legend Katherine Johnson. Katherine was known for her excellent mathematics and science skills, and cartoonist Steve shows that beautifully to allow the world to connect and celebrate her legacy.

Individual: Wanda Dench ([source](#))

Organization: Just a nice Grandmother

Grandmother Wanda Dench will be spending 4th Thanksgiving with her 'wrong' grandson Jamal Hinton. In November 2016, Wanda accidentally sent a text to Jamal inviting him to her house for Thanksgiving after mistaking his number for her grandson's. To which Jamal responded, "You not my grandma. Can I have still have a plate though?" "Of course you can," Wanda wrote back. "That's what grandma's do... feed everyone." Just a nice grandmother connecting with another.

Individual: Kaisei Forman ([source](#))

Organization: Mears Media Group

People from around the world pass toilet paper to each other and show off their juggling and balancing skills. We got soccer (football) players, chefs, IKEA shoppers and horses from dozens of countries getting involved. A great example of connecting with people based on a simple commonality.

WINNER: Wanda Dench

We love the genuine giving attitude of Grandma Wanda Dench. She turned an unexpected technology typo into a connection and positively impacted someone else's life. She also shows great loyalty to keep hosting 4 years later.

What the judges liked about this:

"Wanda & Jamal did the ultimate improv performance by saying 'Yes and' to this mistake and rolling with it. 'Yes and' is a good start to comedy... and then you also have to commit and boy have they!"

"The power of 1 person to impact on one other and the world"

"I hope Wanda can cook!"

Lincoln Leadership Award (Humor and Leadership)

For the individual who uses humor to strengthen leadership, create a compelling vision, or align teams.

Individual: Chrysippus ([source](#))

Organization: *Ancient Athenian philosopher*

History claims that ancient philosopher Chrysippus died from laughing at one of his own jokes. Chrysippus uses humor effectively to diffuse conflict. Perfect way to go, isn't it? :)

Individual: Paul Osincup ([source](#))

Organization: *Humor Strategist*

Paul is a well known humor strategist who creates educational videos with a dash of humor. Most recently, his Bust a Move science rap song with references to Dr. Anthony Fauci made national headlines.

Individual: Leo Varadkar ([source](#))

Organization: *Prime Minister of Ireland*

Mr Varadkar displays his kind leadership and leading by example, by re-registering to work as a doctor during the COVID-19 pandemic. He used to work as a doctor before going into politics and will work weekly shifts at the hospitals that require most support throughout Ireland.

WINNER: Paul Osincup

We love Paul's humor and leadership style, and we also love his character because he did not vote in this category. No matter how hard we tried to physically distance ourselves from this song, the song kept reeling us back in. Well done and 'Just trust this dude' (Dr Fauci).

What the judges liked about this:

"Way to go Paul! He used humor and music to amplify the social distancing messages that we've received from a well known leader in the medical field."

"Paul is alive and well and making a huge impact with his emphasis on humor in leadership. And great TEDx on the topic! And a great leader for AATH!"