The 2019 Torch Awards for Ethics (Torch Award) honors companies whose leaders demonstrate a high level of personal character and ensure that the organization’s practices meet the highest standards of ethics, and consequently generate trust. These companies generate a high level of trust among their employees, customers and their communities. The award embodies the Better Business Bureau’s mission of advancing marketplace trust.

**ELIGIBILITY**

The Torch Award is open to for-profit businesses. **Firms need not be BBB Accredited.**

**EXCLUSIONS**

A company is not eligible if any of the following conditions apply:

1. They have been in business less than three years
2. They have earned less than a “B” rating from BBB
3. There are indications they have not met their financial obligations
4. They have been the recipient of the Torch Award in the past five years
5. They are a government agency. Government contractors can confirm their eligibility by contacting their local BBB.

**THE JUDGING PROCESS**

Entries are evaluated by an independent, voluntary panel of judges comprised of business and community leaders. Remember, since the judges do not know your organization, your written submission (including examples, stories and documents) should provide a robust and accurate description of the organization’s culture.

Criteria for selection are based on the six Principles of TRUST, established by BBB.

**Entry Submission Requirements**

We fully understand that no leader, nor their company is perfect; each company is unique and has different experiences and policies. Consequently, it is not necessary for the applicant to address all of the suggested content for each of the six criteria. Examples are merely provided as illustrations (not requirements) of possible content to demonstrate each Principle. We encourage you to find examples of your leaders’/organization’s practices that best exemplify each, or any, of the six Principles of TRUST!
**Business Information**

Business Name: _____________________________________________________________

Business Address: ____________________________________________________________

Owner/CEO Name: ____________________________________________________________

Title: ______________________________________________________________________

Email Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Phone: __________________________________________________________________________

Fax: ______________________________________________________________________________

Total Number of Full-Time Employees: ________________

Total number of contracted workers (if applicable): ________________

Total Number of Part-Time Employees: ________________

Total number of volunteers (if applicable): ________________

Brief Description of Business:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Name and Location of Parent Business: ___________________________________________

Business Entry Contact Email Address: ___________________________________________

Business Entry Contact Name: _____________________________________________

Business Entry Contact Title: _____________________________________________

Business Entry Contact Phone: ___________________________________________
Section 1

Leaders are reflective and intentionally work to increase the manifestation of their own high character in the business culture. Ethical leaders know that positive character traits are an essential guide to life and work. They strive to live and lead accordingly, and they intentionally seek feedback in order to make personal improvements.

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. A statement of the leader’s or leadership team’s personal code of ethics and how this code became personally significant.
2. A personal letter from the CEO/President or Owner that includes a personal statement of his/her commitment to ethical business practices.
3. Description or evidence of leaders’ participation in workshops/conferences or training in ethics.
4. Coaching/mentoring and feedback assessments that demonstrate that leaders seek to improve their ethical leadership practices.
5. How the leader(s) are transparent, value candor, or receive personal feedback from the organization, vendors, or customers (possibly including how such feedback has led to personal change).
6. Any public statement (speech, advertising, business material, or publication) of the leader’s commitment to ethics. Cases/stories of leaders admitting error or the need for personal change, accepting responsibility, and taking corrective action.

Section 2

Leaders reinforce and build a culture of high character ethics. The leader and leadership team intentionally behave and communicate with one another, employees, and stakeholders in ways that are consistent with their beliefs. Their actions follow their words which intentionally reinforces the character culture of their organization and builds a high-performance business model.

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. How new employees (including part-time or contract employees) are informed and/or trained in the organization’s ethical policies.
2. How the CEO/President/owner’s personal code of ethics is communicated to employees, vendors, or customers.
3. Tools or activities that model, mentor, teach and reinforce defined character ethics as part of normal business/management practices.
4. Use of a character code or content in management/employee meetings.
5. Ethical practices/expectations documented in vendor relation manuals, customer policies, or stakeholder relations procedures.
6. What employees are taught/encouraged to do if others in the organization are not following the ethical code of the organization.
7. How ethical behaviors of employees are identified and recognized.
8. Examples of ethical challenges faced and how they were resolved.
9. Common practices of identifying and/or addressing violations of the business’s ethical code.
10. Examples of situations in which your business demonstrated ethical decision-making. Include the dilemma or problem face by your organization, possible choices you had for resolving the issue, the pros, and cons of each option, any resources that were consulted, and the final outcome.
Section 3

Leaders unify the business around clear purpose and compelling convictions. The leader and leadership team work consistently to ensure clarity of purposes and an adherence to clear convictions that motivate and unite stakeholders. By doing so, they establish and emphasize the “whys” of a business — why work here, why be a customer, why be a supplier, why be who we are?

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. How organizational statements such as “Vision”, “Mission”, “Core Business Values”, “Culture Description”, or “Business Purpose” have been created and/or are used to unite the team.
   • How these statements are shared with existing and potential employees.
2. Examples of training and policies that assist employees and corporate officers in carrying out ethical practices and behaviors.
   • Leadership practices or communications of progress or adherence to the vision/mission of the organization.
   • How feedback collected from the marketplace is used to assess the organization’s performance and focus employees on common issues.
3. Feedback from employees is utilized to make adjustments in organizational practices to better match the vision/mission or core values.
   • How recognition/celebration or other practices are used to unite employees and reinforce the mission or organization’s values.
4. Compensation systems/factors that help to unite workers.
5. Transparency of, and teaching of, management information and reports.

Section 4

Leaders guide organizational performance by implementing high competency management practices. High character must be accompanied by high competency. The leader and leadership team continually manage performance by establishing goals, measuring achievement and allocating just rewards. They establish practices that represent their commitments to the future and the means for the business to achieve those commitments.

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. The planning process, including timeframes and the organizational levels that participate.
   • Practices in the use of clear measurements to evaluate progress, analyze performance and adjust plans to accomplish goals.
2. The processes/systems of establishing individual/team/department objectives or targets including time frames and responsibilities.
4. Samples of your advertising or promotional informational materials that you feel particularly exemplify your focus on ethical expression.
5. Accountability and compensation systems implemented for high performance.
   • Rewards and recognition that integrate performance and high character or ethical behavior.
6. How employees demonstrate accountability for performance and ethical behavior.
7. Unique budgeting or forecasting processes and unique performance metrics.
   • How innovation is encouraged and rewarded.
Section 5

Leaders prize the intrinsic value of people. The leader and the leadership team adopt and implement human resource practices that prepare, continually support/recognize and provide opportunities for growth of all staff members.

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. Hiring practices that insure people are hired for character.
2. How employees are involved in hiring practices.
3. Unique systems and processes for training and preparing staff.
4. Practices and procedures to resolve ethical issues.
5. Any policies or procedures that specifically ensure that employees are treated fairly, respectfully, and that workplace safety is ensured.
6. Mechanisms or procedures for employee professional development.
7. Termination practices that demonstrate respect of the individual.
8. How employees influence organizational practices and decisions.
9. Operational structures or systems that support the individual employee’s ability to perform.
10. Processes that insure meritorious selection of individuals for assignments and additional responsibilities.
11. Other practices that demonstrate leadership’s and/or business’s commitment to individual employees.

Section 6

The leader and leadership team transfer their ethical beliefs by their active engagement with their industry and the communities from which the business derives its customers, workforce, vendors, investors, and governance.

The following are suggested ideas for demonstrating this principle (two or more are required):

1. How leaders/employees participate in industry organizations and activities to promote best practices.
   - Examples of programs, contributions, and activities that return value and support your community.
   - Examples of your reputation for ethical standards of behavior in the marketplace along with a list of recognitions or acknowledgments by industry peers, trade associations, or the communities in which you do business.
   - How employees are encouraged to, and recognized for, spending time in community service activities that the organization values.
2. Any contribution of funds, or in-kind services to community programs that is consistent with the organization’s values and character.
   - How the company’s advertising, operations, risk management, governance, and regulatory compliance behaviors are assessed against proven standards.
3. Proof of achievement with any industry benchmarks for high standards of business excellence.

REFERENCES

Provide three references from one of each: customer, vendor, and community partner.

Please email or mail documents to BBB 748 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5526 or to bjm@batonrouge.bbb.org.

Documents need to be completed and sent in by September 15, 2019. Submissions after 4:00 P.M. will not be accepted.