

WORKLIFE AWARDS

———— PRESENTED BY ————

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2020 Digiday Worklife Awards

For employers in the digital media and marketing space, providing an effective and rewarding working environment for employees has never been so difficult — or so important. The pandemic and its consequences posed profound and unexpected challenges, from facilitating . remote work to preserving the mental health of workers.

The companies honored in this year's Worklife Awards pulled off a nearly impossible tightrope walk. They kept the lines of communication between employees and supervisors open, even as offices shuttered across the globe. They provided their employees with benefits and resources to help them live their healthiest lives, both physically and mentally. All the while, they encouraged new innovations, continued training their employees to prepare them for advancement and leadership, and even recruited external talent to ensure that the wells of opportunity wouldn't run dry for aspiring professionals.

And despite everything, they did all this while meeting their revenue goals and growing their companies. In the process, they ensured that the world of marketing, advertising and digital media — and all the people who work within it — will go on to fight another day.

Use this guide to explore all the winners of the 2020 Digiday Worklife Awards. Over the course of each entry, you'll learn why our winners were chosen, and gain insights into what we can learn from their efforts.

Most Innovative Culture

Critical Mass

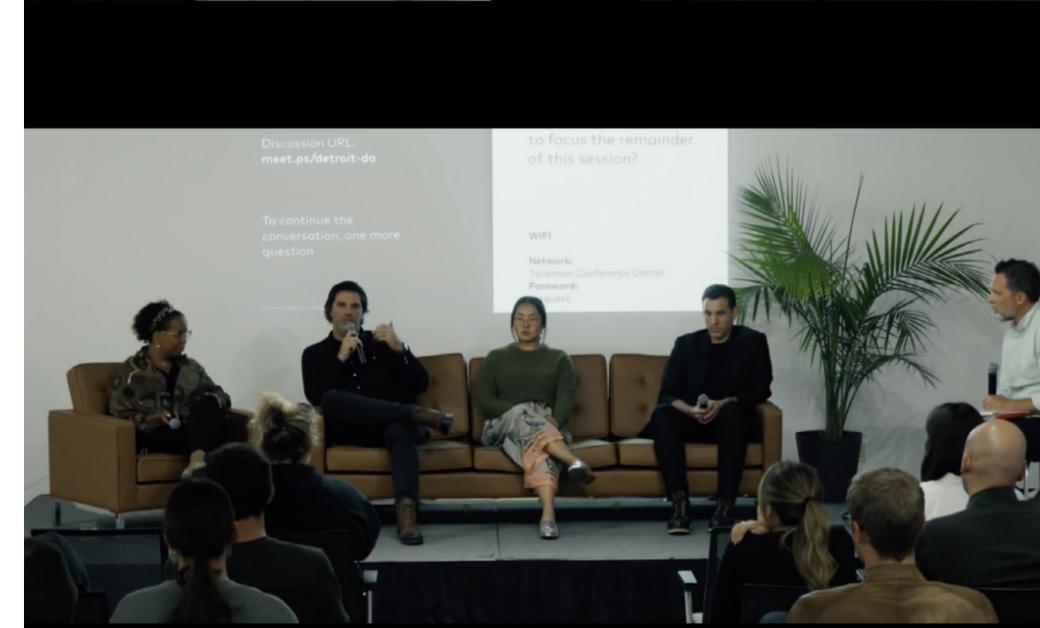
Critical Mass

Critical Mass

In a year of unprecedented challenges, innovation was critical not only to success, but survival. Marketing and design agency Critical Mass took this reality to heart, and wove innovation into the core DNA of its workplace culture. To ensure that its employees were consistently empowered to embark on new projects and accounts, the agency invented a new casting tool that uses employee data points to build teams suited for specific projects. The agency also launched its new OpenBook program, a digital mentorship tool designed to connect recent graduates with company staffers for one-on-one Q&As and portfolio reviews. Finally, Critical Mass began to hold team workshops in which each volunteer received a brief and was tasked with solving it. Critical Mass then moved forward on producing the most innovative ideas, which products were driving the most interest on digital platforms.

Insights

Critical Mass recognized that companies are at their most inventive when employees are empowered to craft new ideas and try on new hats. Stagnation is the enemy of innovation.





Most Collaborative Culture

Tastemade



Tastemade

Since 2012, the food-oriented media company has programmed “This Week in Tastemade,” a series of weekly all-company meetings to share updates on projects, announcements about business initiatives or even just supportive shoutouts to colleagues. The company also leveraged “Tastemade Talks,” a series empowering famous individuals to share experiences or useful information designed to positively impact Tastemade’s employees’ lives and careers.

Insights

As the events of 2020 forced workplaces across the globe to embrace remote work, Tastemade’s meetings and talks became an increasingly critical feeder for team collaboration. Rich interactions between colleagues can eliminate a great social distance.

Most Passionate Employees

RingPartner



RingPartner

To succeed in 2020, teams had to step into the unknown — and even develop an appetite for risk and a tolerance for failure. Technology company RingPartner embraced an experimental mindset when it came to its employees' work life, establishing its new "core hours" approach to grant its workers flexibility. Under core hours, employees had the flexibility to build a schedule that worked for them and their families, and accommodated other responsibilities that didn't easily fit into a typical nine-to-five workday.

Insights

Productivity doesn't land at the exact same time of day for everyone. RingPartner recognized that a worker whose unique needs are met is far likelier to be energized and effective — and to become truly passionate about the company's mission and welfare.



You'll always find us lifting each other up as a team.

We like to laugh together often...





Most Engaged Employees

Hulu

hulu

Hulu

Hulu's "dogfooding" series for internal beta testing allows employees — affectionately dubbed "Hulugans" — to sample features not yet available to the public. Recent features reviewed through the dogfooding series included Hulu's new "Watch Party" tool for co-viewing and its revamped TV user experience. Hulu also offers more than 90 Hulugan-led clubs, running the gamut from "BBQulugans" to "Fresh Prince Fridays," as an inclusive way to help employees interact around specific topics of interest. Otherly monthly talks and meetings featuring executives and leaders at the company round out the many ways that Hulu helps its employees stay engaged.

Insights

Perhaps the surest sign of Hulugans' engagement with their employer: More than 98 percent of them engage with content on their "Huluverse" intranet every month. At Hulu, engagement is measurable.

Most Committed to Work-Life Balance

Hinge

Hinge

Hinge

The company, known for its relationship app, incorporated four-day work weeks and no-meetings Tuesdays to reduce its employees' workloads and create a more productive workplace. Creating happier, healthier employees gave rise to a workplace that was more productive, not less. By reminding employees of the importance of time off, Hinge oversaw an average 46 percent decline on each employee's Slack messages each weekend throughout 2020. The company also gave its employees a \$100 stipend each month for in-person or digital dates, and offered free counseling through the BetterHelp therapy app.

Insights

Hinge is a relationship company. And through its new work-life initiatives, the company ensured that its team-members weren't putting their careers or their mental health ahead of their own relationships. It never hurts to practice what you preach.





**Leading the charge globally
for better working cultures**

Best Employer for Remote Employees

Croud

croud

Croud

Supported by more than 220 in-house staffers across four key offices in the US, UK and Australia, digital marketing agency Croud pulled out all the stops to connect its 2,400+ remote professionals, also known as “Croudies.” Croud’s ongoing efforts to create an effective peer culture in an environment without in-person interactions include the use of a “Shouting About Success” chat room on Google Hangouts and the recent implementation of the Bonusly platform, a peer-to-peer reward scheme that allows employees to reward their peers with “Croud Coins” that can be used to claim gifts and prizes.

Insights

Croud has worked diligently to enable flexible and remote work — a factor which has enabled the agency to attract talent that might otherwise have been weeded out of the industry due to issues such as disability and family commitments. Brands and agencies that don’t make remote easy are likely to miss out on the best talent.

Best Employer for Parents

Dotdash



Dotdash

Over the course of 2020, countless companies across the globe have struggled to reward the hard work and dedication of working parents with empathy and flexibility. Dotdash was very much an exception. The publishing group granted parents 10-plus weeks of family leave, flex hours and the ability to take advantage of an unlimited PTO policy. The company also granted birthing mothers an additional 6-8 weeks to recover and spend time at home with family. Finally, one Dotdash executive — herself a mother — created the Women's Council, a new employee resource group designed in part to support working parents.

Insights

Dotdash ultimately understood, and acted upon, a very simple truth: If you're a parent — working or otherwise — raising your children is your most important job. In a radically altered world, and with school closings, employers that fail to accommodate the evolving needs of parents are destined to wind up with a less effective workforce.

Best Workplace for Young Careers

Deloitte

Deloitte.

Deloitte

With a commitment to recruiting and fostering young talent, the professional services company created programs such as SHINE, designed to facilitate campus hires into its marketing department, also known as its “Marketing Excellence” program. And the company’s Leadership Excellence Apprentice Program, LEAP 360°, gave participants a comprehensive view of the Marketing Excellence program through a two-year period of elective projects providing opportunities for cross-training to enhance skills and gain exposure to new teams. Finally, the company’s Career Central site helped newer professionals identify their areas for growth, and provided them with the tools to develop them.

Insights

At a moment when many companies struggled to invest in its existing workforce — let alone recruit new candidates — Deloitte did both, recruiting new talent and giving its young workers endless opportunities to train. Now more than ever, workers need a chance to grow.

Nurturing young careers through
The SHINE program





Most Dedicated to Employee Growth

Metric Theory



Metric Theory

The digital marketing agency takes guidance from its “STEP” values — short for Self-Awareness, Team Orientation, Empathy and Proactiveness. With these personal growth attributes designed in mind, the agency built two programs designed to keep pushing people to learn and grow. These were BuildMT (a sort of internal “Shark Tank” designed to harness ideas and creativity) and MT Gives, a program that sees Metric Theory employees volunteering their time and digital marketing expertise for worthy communities and organizations. In the process of overseeing these initiatives, Metric Theory has provided its employees with countless growth and leadership opportunities.

Insights

Thanks to its internal leadership initiatives, Metric Theory tends to promote from within. In H1 of 2020 alone, Metric Theory’s strong development of its employees enabled the agency to promote 31 percent of its workforce. Nothing helps an agency grow like helping its employees to grow first.

Most Dedicated to Employee Wellness

SpotX

SPOTX

SpotX

To ensure employees felt supported at an unprecedented time, the tech company introduced 26 new initiatives to promote healthy remote working habits and company benefits. Physical wellness initiatives included a free, 30-day fitness challenge, Denver's virtual 5k Pride Run sponsored by SpotX, virtual yoga classes, and gym reimbursement up to \$600 per year. The company also promoted "stay nourished challenges" which awarded healthy choices. As for mental wellness, SpotX offered programs such as the WorkLifeMatters Employee Assistance Program (EAP), company-wide mental health days, regular mental health virtual training sessions, and more.

Insights

SpotX recognized that nothing's more important for a company than keeping its employees healthy — both mentally and physically. It's the only way to keep workers productive — but more importantly, it's the right thing to do.





Most Committed to Diversity and Inclusion

Axios



Axios

The news organization undertook a mission to create a world within its own walls that was better than the one around us. With quarterly DEI updates, an attention to the company's demographics and an annual internal survey to assess the company's progress when it came to inclusion, the company took strides to create a workforce that exhibited core values including diversity, fairness, justice, transparency, and inclusiveness. Axios also allotted PTO for religious and cultural holidays not recognized at the federal level, and partnered with Allie, a slack bot that provides curated DEI content and allows employees to anonymously report non-inclusive behavior.

Insights

Axios recognized that a news organization can't credibly report on issues like equality and discrimination without walking the walk. Media companies that report on issues related to justice and diversity are well advised to become bastions of justice and diversity themselves.

Most Committed to the Community/Social Good

EvolveMKD

evolveMKD

EvolveMKD

The PR and digital marketing agency donates at least 10 percent of its annual profits to local programs that support women, children and teens. A business owned and founded by women, the agency took strides to empower women not only through volunteer efforts and charitable donations, but also by hiring young women and empowering their professional aspirations. The agency's output included work with a pro bono client, the Women's Dermatological Society, and continued support of Safe Horizons, a New York City-based nonprofit supporting victims of domestic violence.

Insights

EvolveMKD didn't just pay lip service to socially crucial causes — it donated hard-earned cash and provided pro bono services, even during a year when agencies across the globe were strapped for resources. It's easy to say you're in it for the social good — but EvolveMKD proved it.





Best On-Boarding Process

Hulu

hulu

Hulu

Before Hulu's new hires can become official Hulgans, they're first known as — you guessed it — Nulugans. During their stretch as Nulugans, Hulu's new recruits must complete a two-day interactive training program covering topics such as Hulu's business, its core values, benefits and industry terminology. Sessions take place every other week, with orientation groups kept small to ensure that Nulugans get the chance to know each other in an intimate setting. Nulugans are even assigned a buddy to meet with after their first 90 days of Hulgagan life, providing a chance to check in and maintain connections made during orientation.

Insights

Hulu makes sure that its employees have the basics of the industry — and a solid connection to other new recruits — before swinging the doors open wide. An effective orientation goes a long way.

HR Leader of the Year

Critical Mass

Critical Mass

Critical Mass - Sara Anhorn, EVP, Talent

As the agency's EVP of Talent, Sara's mission is two-fold: elevating the agency's identity, and helping it grow into an even more purpose-driven organization. With an employee-first mentality, new initiatives that Sara established include "Openbook," a new digital mentorship tool to connect recent graduates with a professional at Critical Mass for one-on-one guidance and Q&A, and "CM Wellness," a series of weekly updates on timely matters that challenge employees and their communities, including resources on how to work from home with kids and how to support minority colleagues.

Insights

With her role at Critical Mass, Sara ensured that employees had all the resources they needed to flourish within changing times — all while providing aspiring media pros with opportunities of their own. In tumultuous times, effective leaders provide everyone with the resources they need.

ADCADEMICS PODCAST COURSE #24

Sara Anhorn
EVP of Talent
Critical Mass NY

#ADCADEMICS

COVID-19 BONUS EPISODE

“

SARA ANHORN

We will come out of this at some point and things are going to bounce back and there will be opportunities.

”

ADCADEMICS PODCAST





Top Boss

Tinuiti



Tinuiti: Zach Morrison, CEO

Zach spearheaded the internal launch of “Connectiviti,” the search engine marketing company’s new initiative designed to connect employees’ day jobs to the broader company strategy, creating a catalyst for their growth, progression, and overall happiness. Zach also shares the latest company news with everyone in several ways, including bi-weekly company huddles, in which the entire company gathers to hear important news and updates. He also hosts a weekly Open Office Hours session, during this time he is available to all employees via zoom to chat, ask questions or hear their concerns. Just as importantly, Zach instituted a program of mandatory mental health days, and founded T-Up, the company’s new paid internship and mentoring program.

Insights

In addition to undertaking new initiatives and adapting the company to changing times, Zach was consistently and personally communicative with his employees, giving them all the information they needed to feel informed. Transparency and communication mean everything.

Employer of the Year

Terakeet



Terakeet

The enterprise SEO company launched a new benefits package for remote employees, including new hardware, an additional home office stipend, a \$250 reimbursable fitness expense, and sponsored quarterly travel to the company's Syracuse headquarters. The company also held a number of team-building events, including its 2nd annual Employee Appreciation Day, where employees received Terakeet-branded swag (mailed out remotely, of course). To facilitate conversations between managers and employees, the company held regular "Career Conversations" meetings. Terakeet also launched its new Employee Assistance Program for free, confidential advice and support for issues ranging from finance to mental health. Just as importantly, the company's employees continue to run "Cause for the 'Cuse," an active charity that's raised \$17,000 over the past year.

Insights

Terakeet provided a stellar working environment by attacking numerous problems at once, from helping employees to obtain the right hardware to making it easier for them to continue participating in company culture. In unprecedented times, there's no one solution.



About Digiday Awards

The Digiday Awards include 14 different programs yearly, with focuses on video, content marketing, media and technology, among others. Competitors' brands are placed in front of judging panels made up of C-Level leaders from leading organizations, and winners are featured in Digiday's media coverage, marketing, Awards Guides, livestream galas and other announcements. The Digiday Awards have recognized companies and campaigns since 2014.

For more information on this or other Digiday Awards programs, visit [**digiday.com/awards**](https://digiday.com/awards)

Questions for the awards team? Let us know at [**awards@digiday.com**](mailto:awards@digiday.com)