



BFA HSBC UK British Franchise Awards Categories and Criteria Guide 2026

Franchisor Award Categories

Franchisor of the Year – Emerging

Recognising excellence in franchising

ELIGIBILITY: This award is open to all BFA member franchisors who are within their first five years of operating as a franchisor. Entrants must be able to evidence at least one franchisee who has traded for a minimum of twelve months and is performing in line with the projections. Profit and loss accounts for the franchisee must be submitted to evidence this as part of the entry.

To be successful in this category, entrants must demonstrate a strong and credible entry into the UK franchise industry. You will need to evidence how robust foundations have been put into place to support franchisees, including onboarding, training and early-stage support. You should be able to showcase how these foundations position the network for sustainable growth in the coming years.

Franchisor of the Year – Expanding

Recognising excellence in franchising

ELIGIBILITY: This award is open to all BFA member franchisors who are between six and fifteen years into their franchising journey. Entrants must be able to provide profit & loss accounts for two established franchisees as part of the submission.

To be successful in this category, entrants must clearly demonstrate how their business has evolved from a new franchise to a brand that is scaling for growth. You will need to evidence development of processes, people and organisational structure, showing how these have been strengthened to support a growing network and deliver consistent franchisee success.

Franchisor of the Year – Established

Recognising excellence in franchising

ELIGIBILITY: This award is open to all BFA member franchisors that have over fifteen years' experience operating as a franchisor. Entrants must be able to provide profit & loss accounts for two established franchisees as part of the submission.

As the ultimate accolade in UK franchising, this award recognises franchisors who demonstrate long-term leadership, resilience and ethical excellence. Entrants must evidence how they have consistently championed ethical franchising, successfully navigated economic challenges and responded to evolving consumer demands. Judges will be looking for clear evidence of a robust and mature infrastructure, alongside comprehensive support that enables franchisees to thrive and reach their full potential. Entries should showcase standout strategies and initiatives, underpinned by substantial evidence of positive impact across the franchise network.



A strong focus on the entire franchisee lifecycle is essential, from recruitment and onboarding through to ongoing engagement, performance and successful resale, ensuring franchisees can realise a good return on their investment. To win this award, entrants must clearly demonstrate what they have delivered in the last 12–18 months to move the dial across their franchise network and continue in building their legacy.

Research & Development

Increasing market opportunity

ELIGIBILITY: All BFA members

Judges are looking for significant developments that have been made to increase franchisee routes to market, the target market or the product and service to meet changing consumer demands. You will be expected to share what you have developed, why you have developed it and network impact results.

Leadership & Culture

Cultivating great team environments and developing people

ELIGIBILITY: All BFA members

Judges are looking for more than just a good description of how you align your mission, vision and values to your people. They want to see evidence of how you invest in people, your business environment, development across the team and the direct impact this has had on your business. What is your net promoter score? Do you run employee opinion surveys? Have you got career and development pathways that are being used to grow your people?

Franchise Support

Frameworks for long term franchisee success

ELIGIBILITY: All BFA members

Judges are looking for evidence in franchisee results! How do you onboard successfully? What are you doing to ensure a great growth trajectory from day one for new franchisees? What are your touchpoints throughout the franchisee lifecycle? and how do you prevent franchisee plateaus and burnout?

Marketing

Leading the way with winning strategies

ELIGIBILITY: All BFA members

This award goes beyond your traditional marketing mix! Judges are looking for innovative initiatives, campaigns or partnerships that have had a significant impact on brand awareness, reputation and importantly lead generation for your franchisees.