Award winning business leaders who inspired us in 2022

From pasty makers to tech pioneers – business leaders up and down the country that have gone the extra mile to impress our business award judges.

This year, we have celebrated those individuals that have shown exceptional leadership against a challenging economic backdrop.

Here, we highlight some of the winners in our Business Person and Entrepreneur categories in Reach business awards held across the country in 2022 in partnership with our brilliant sister live brands.

Our Reach events team has run business events in England – from Devon to Tyneside – in Wales and in Scotland through our sister site Insider.co.uk.

We'll be honouring more businesses in our awards across the country in 2023 – keep reading BusinessLive for more details.

Poku Osei is the chief executive of Babbasa
(Image: jon Kent/Bristol Live)

Poku Pipim Osei, founder of Babbasa, Bristol

Winner of the Business Person of the Year category at the BristolLive Business Awards 2022

Poku Pipim Osei is a respected social entrepreneur and the founder and chief executive of award-winning youth empowerment organisation Babbasa.

Poku relocated to Bristol from Ghana in 2008 and left a paid job to set up Babbasa with no start-up investment.

Babbasa is now a Queen's Award-winning enterprise, which has supported over 2,200 young people to date. It has 13 paid staff, 124 active mentors and 167 partner agencies, and provides young people often disadvantaged by their race,

education or social status with access to career-oriented employment, education, and training opportunities in Bristol.

In 2018, the late Queen invited Poku to Buckingham Palace for his contributions to the Commonwealth diaspora. In 2019, he was awarded the Lord Mayor's Medal for his service to Bristol communities.



Mark Norton took home the Business Person of the Year Award (Image: Mike Lister Photography)

Mark Norton, owner Prima Bakeries Group, Cornwall

Winner of the Business Person of the Year, Western Morning News Business Awards

Since acquiring Prima Bakeries in 2010, Mark Norton has helped

the business go from strength to strength – growing the company significantly and expanding its team from 19 to 90. This growth continued during the pandemic – with Mark's guidance helping Prima avoid making redundancies or furloughs, with Prima even taking on new team members.

Despite the obstacles of the pandemic, Mark was also able to complete the purchase of Cornish Premier Pasties, a subsidiary within the group. He has secured funding during a challenging time and using each companies' strengths to make both of them more effective and successful.

Kavita Parmar, co-Founder of Word360, Birmingham

Winner of the West Midlands Woman in Tech at the West Midlands Tech Awards 2022

Kavita launched the Birmingham-based business in 2013 with her husband Tiku Chauhan.

The company works with public, private and not-for-profit organisations to help them deliver access to their services through its own tech platform ‘Wordskii’.

Word360’s network of self-employed interpreters can help clients with translation services at any time and anywhere, either in-person or via video or telephone.

It is used by multiple sectors but the team has focused on health and social care and especially supporting local communities and people from disadvantaged and hard-to-reach backgrounds which proved invaluable for healthcare clients during the Covid-19 pandemic. Its client roster includes the NHS, National Lottery, children’s charity Barnardo’s and budget retailer B&M.

Kavita started her working life as an optometrist and then in 2009 created e-commerce site Adaptawear which was an adaptive clothing line for elderly people.

After selling this in 2013, she saw an opportunity within the language sector to develop technology that would enable patients in healthcare settings to communicate in any language at any time.

The company had started out with just four staff but had now grown to 45, with plans to target new markets outside of its core UK function in Europe, the US and Canada.



Myles Shaw, centre, with mum and dad Evette and Ivor Shaw, left and right, with North East Lincs Area Chamber Council chair Irene Keal and Wilkin Chapman partner Jane Eatock. (Image: Grimsby News And Pictures Agency)

Myles Shaw, The Positive Co, Grimsby

Winner of the Northern Lincolnshire Business Person of the Year, Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards 2022.

Myles Shaw was recognised for having dramatically advanced the family flooring business with flair and digital acumen. The multi-channel business owner was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2016. And after taking his parents Ivor and Evette on stage with him to collect the accolade, he said: “I was asked how it felt when I won Young Entrepreneur, and I didn’t know what to say, on reflection I felt like I went from a boy to a man. I know I am nothing but a product of my Mum and Dad, so to be able to take them on stage with me meant so much. It is a pleasure to be here with them, especially as my Mum was

really ill this time last year, with aggressive brain cancer. This award is for them, for all they have done.”

The Positive Co incorporates the Grimsby store, online business RunRug and a new Lincoln outlet, opened last year, as well as domestic and commercial new build fit outs. It is backed up by 40,000 sq ft of storage.

“Business is great, testing, troubling, but we were positively affected through Covid, we got a lot more market share, so there was a financial stretch with more staff, more vans, more fitters and a need for more warehouse space.

“I said in 2014 the target was £10 million turnover, we’re still going for it; we’re at £7.5 million and we will achieve that target. Most importantly, I’m enjoying the journey, having fun and loving who I work with.”

Since the win he has added seafood online retail as a further interest.



Gary Gallen, of Rradar, claimed the Entrepreneur of the Year title. The award was presented by Dave Leedham, of Sewell Group, and collected on Gary's behalf by Sarah Blanchfield (Image: Richard Addison Photography)

Gary Gallen, founder of Rradar, Hull

Winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards at Hull Live Business Awards 2022

Gary Gallen is the founder of Rradar – a litigation and commercial law firm that works to bring out the full potential of technology and put it to use in providing outstanding legal services.

Founded in 2012, the Hull-headquartered firm provides clients with legal services for every business need – combining expertise with digital tools, to provide bespoke legal

services in an efficient and innovative way.

Since starting Rradar, Mr Gallen has overseen the growth to 150 employees, forging commercial relationships, pioneering digital solutions, and helping to create the innovative business culture key to Rradar’s success.

Reflecting on the growth previously, he said: “We have hired a team of incredibly talented and smart people who bring their expertise and dedication to support our vision to modernise the legal industry, transforming what we can do and how we can do it.”

“We offer a technology-driven, preventative strategy and solutions that make the law more accessible and affordable for our clients.”

The business has been named in the 50 of the Northern Tech Top 100 and recognised as Barclays Scale-up Entrepreneur Regional Winner in recent years, while winning a clutch of sector accolades.

The Women’s Organisation chief executive, Maggie O’Carroll

Maggie O’Carroll, Chief Executive, The Women’s Organisation, Liverpool

Winner, Business Person of the Year, [Regional Business Awards from the Liverpool ECHO and BusinessLive]

A leader in the field of women’s enterprise, Maggie O’Carroll has dedicated her professional life to improving the economic position of women. Since establishing The Women’s Organisation in 1996, Maggie has helped more than 70,000 women start and scale their businesses. Because of Maggie’s leadership and strategic plans, future generations of women stand to benefit from cultural and societal advancements.

Sarah Howell, Chief Executive, Arecor

Therapeutics, Saffron Walden

Winner of Business Person of the Year at the CambridgeshireLive Business Awards 2022

Sarah Howell has gone from being the only person in her family to go to university to becoming CEO of the ever-growing Arecor Therapeutics.

With more than two decades of senior experience in the pharmaceutical industry and having helped develop life-changing medicines, she is the role model which less privileged and female university alumni coming into STEM need to see.

Gavin Griffiths, founder of Gavin Griffiths Recycling, Swansea

Winner of the The Entrepreneur of the Year at Swansea Bay Business Awards

During the pandemic, the company invested in a new recycling site in Cwmgwili, despite the wider challenging economic climate. With investment and vision, the site has been turned into a cutting edge waste processing plant – with the increased capabilities allowing the firm to access new markets and increase turnover.

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