Fortel's D&I push sees it crowned Company of the Year

An employment agency which supplies staff to the construction industry across the UK has been crowned Company of the Year at our annual business awards.

Fortel, which is headquartered in Walsall, places thousands of agency staff at more than 130 locations and also trains the next generation of industry workers.

It won our brand new Diversity and Inclusion category before being picked from the other winners to be named our overall Company of the Year at tonight's Birmingham BusinessLive Awards in association with the Birmingham Post 2022 **(scroll down for full list of winners).**

Our judges described the company as a disruptor in its field and were impressed with its work in diversity and inclusion and how it excelled in a difficult sector during the pandemic.

Fortel opened a new head office last year near the M6 which also contains a training academy to upskill workers from all backgrounds across the West Midlands.

It also carried out an initiative called 'Top 5 by 2025' which promised to increase under-represented demographics in its own workforce by 25 per cent by 2025.

It is hosting a 'Diversity and Inclusion Fortnight' including training and keynote speaker events while its #MakeItStick campaign encouraged construction industry leaders to sign a pledge to embrace diversity.

Staff completed courses and ambassador programmes focussed on issues such as fairness, respect, mental health and LGBTQ+, with staff wearing stickers on hard hats to highlight their experience and knowledge.

The scheme won backing from the Mace Dragados joint venture which is working on the HS2 terminal at London Euston with staff there undertaking courses.

Away from the construction sites, Fortel has teamed up with the One Walsall charity to help provide 20 meals every Tuesday to homeless hostel Happy Times Housing.

It has also worked with Birmingham homeless support services charity SIFA Fireside to provide meals at Christmas, repair its path so those with disabilities can access the facility and is collaborating with it on recruitment to attract the unemployed into the construction industry.

All the winners on stage at the Birmingham BusinessLive Awards 2022

Birmingham Post editor Graeme Brown said: “My congratulations goes to all of our finalists and winners and especially Fortel.

“Diversity and inclusion in the business world has moved from the fringes to the heart of the conversation so perhaps it’s fitting that the winner of our first ever award for D&I has also been named our overall Company of the Year.

“Our judging panel was impressed with its commitment to helping all sections of society to address a crippling skills shortage in the construction industry.

“After what has been a very hard two years for the business world, it is heartening to see companies across the West Midlands continuing to recruit, thrive and innovate.”

The event was held at the ICC in Birmingham city centre and was our first in-person business awards for two and half years because of the pandemic.

The ceremony was hosted by Heart FM broadcaster Ed James, who was also a finalist in the Professional Services category with

his PR company HDY Agency, and was supported by event partners Albert's Schloss, Boardrm and Fazenda, with live band The Tzars providing the entertainment.

The full list of winners at our 2022 awards is below and click through here to read the shortlist:

Small Business of the Year

Acutec

New Business of the Year

Voilo

Diversity and Inclusion Award and Company of the Year

Fortel

Professional Services Firm of the Year

Shoosmiths

Property and Construction Business of the Year

Port Loop

Third Sector Organisation of the Year

Acorns Children's Hospice

CSR Project of the Year

Martin James Network

Green Business of the Year

The Appliance Recycling Group

Young Businessperson of the Year

Henrietta Brealey, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce