

2026 IAMCP LIFT AWARDS



Leadership Inspiring
Future Talent

● ● ● ● PEOPLE & CULTURE

The Submission Guide

How to submit a strong nomination and understand exactly what the judges are looking for.

A mini guide for Microsoft partners preparing an IAMCP LIFT Awards nomination.

About This Guide

This guide is for Microsoft partners preparing a nomination for the People & Culture category of the IAMCP LIFT Awards. It explains what the judges are looking for, how to answer each question well, and what strong evidence looks like in practice.

The awards recognize organizations that treat people and culture as a deliberate performance strategy, not a poster on the wall. The strongest submissions connect specific investments to specific outcomes, backed by real data.



What the judges reward

Connect **specific investments to specific outcomes**, backed by real data.

What Judges Are Looking For

Across every question, judges are evaluating three things.



Specificity Over Aspiration

Real numbers, named programs, and concrete timelines carry far more weight than statements about what you believe or strive toward.



Candor About Gaps

Genuinely strong cultures are comfortable admitting where data is incomplete, or something didn't go to plan. Over-polished answers with no friction are a flag.



Connected Thinking

The strongest nominees go beyond reporting numbers: they explain why things moved, linking a specific initiative to a specific outcome.

Before You Begin

Gather these data points before drafting. Don't have all of them? Note the gaps honestly and describe how you'll measure them going forward.



People Metrics

- Voluntary attrition rate (3-year trend)
- Average employee tenure
- eNPS or engagement score (3-year trend)
- % of hires from employee referrals
- % of senior leaders promoted from within
- Training hours & certifications per employee



Business Metrics

- Current CSAT or NPS score (3-year trend)
- Client renewal or retention rate
- Revenue or headcount growth over 3 years
- % of new business from referrals / repeat clients
- Estimated cost of attrition at your current rate

Answering the Questions

Attempt to answer every question. Responses that skip questions, or substitute general commentary for specific evidence, will score lower.



Answer every one

Skipped questions and vague commentary both cost points.



400 words max

Keep each response under 400 words. Make every one count.

Q1 – Q2

People

Development, internal promotion & inclusion

Q3 – Q4

Culture

Values in action & competitive advantage

Q5 – Q7

Performance

Sentiment, retention & the business case

People

Q1

How do you develop your people, and how many leaders came from within?

WHAT TO COVER

Give an overview of how you upskill your people: the types of skilling, plus learning hours and certifications per employee over the last 12 months. State what share of current senior leaders were promoted from within vs hired externally, and describe your internal mobility pathways.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“Last year we ran AI-literacy training for all staff and logged 29,800 training hours and 118 Microsoft exams across 200 employees. 81% of our senior leaders were promoted from within, including our current CTO, who started as a graduate hire.”

Q2

What have you done structurally to build an inclusive organization?

WHAT TO COVER

Describe the programs, policies, or structural changes you made to bring underrepresented groups in. Include current workforce composition data (gender, age, and background) across both technical and leadership roles.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“41% of our technical consultants are women, up from 28% three years ago. We got there through a targeted apprenticeship programme and by removing the retirement policy to retain senior talent.”

Culture

Q3

How do your stated values show up as specific, observable actions in day-to-day work?

WHAT TO COVER

Share recent cultural initiatives, and describe at least one example from the last 12 months where you lived your values, especially when doing so was costly or uncomfortable.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“We lost a client renewal because we refused to cut corners on a delivery timeline. Our values say quality over speed, so we held the line, explained why, and the client returned six months later.”

Q4

How has your culture become a competitive advantage?

WHAT TO COVER

Share examples that demonstrate the connection between your values and programs and real outcomes: talent retention, customer satisfaction, and business growth.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“We shifted to promoting leaders internally three years ago. Because they carry existing client relationships and institutional knowledge, our client-satisfaction score has held above 9.1 for eight straight quarters, and 60% of new business now comes from client referrals.”

Performance

Q5

What does your engagement / sentiment data show, and what have you acted on?

WHAT TO COVER

Share your current eNPS or engagement score and its 3-year trend. Describe how you gather feedback beyond surveys, and give one example of something uncomfortable the data revealed, and what you changed.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“Our eNPS moved from +12 to +41 over three years. In 2024, feedback flagged that middle managers weren't communicating strategy clearly. We redesigned our quarterly all-hands and trained 14 managers on cascade communication.”

Q6

What do your referral and retention metrics look like?

WHAT TO COVER

Provide data on employee referrals, current attrition rate, average tenure, and the voluntary vs involuntary split. Compare to your industry benchmark where you can, and show the 3-year trend rather than a single data point.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

“Nearly 36% of new hires come from employee referrals, and voluntary attrition is 8%, trending down over three years, against an industry benchmark of 18%. Average tenure is 5.2 years, and over 30% of our people have been with us for more than a decade.”



The Business Case

Q7

If you had to make the business case for investing in people and culture, what would you say?

WHAT TO COVER

Provide specific, verifiable metrics that connect your people-and-culture investment to business performance: cost savings from reduced attrition, revenue growth tied to retention, referral rates, CSAT scores, or internal-promotion rates.

STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

1

~\$380K saved / year

Replacing a mid-level consultant costs 45% of annual salary. Our 8% attrition vs the industry's 18% saves roughly \$380,000 a year.

2

60% lower cost-per-hire

36% of new hires are referrals, cutting our cost-per-hire by around 60%.

3

78% client renewal / 5 yrs

CSAT held above 9 has driven a 78% client-renewal rate over five years.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

These patterns consistently produce lower scores.



Describing your values without showing how they show up in specific decisions or daily behaviors.



Listing initiatives without connecting them to outcomes.



Giving a single data point with no context: a 92% CSAT means more once it has held for four years.



Using aspirational language (“we strive to”, “we believe in”) with no evidence underneath.



Presenting a polished picture with no acknowledgment of what is still a work in progress.



Answering Q7 with no actual numbers: “our culture drives business results” is not a CFO-ready argument.

● ● ● ● READY TO SUBMIT?

Submit Your Nomination

Deadline: Sep 28, 6 pm PST



Questions about your submission?

Contact the IAMCP PC&P Committee via your regional IAMCP email or LinkedIn.

Watch the IAMCP email and LinkedIn for reminders



2026 IAMCP LIFT AWARDS



**Leadership Inspiring
Future Talent**