



Pure gold

And the winner is... manufacturing. TBM Consulting's Richard Holland tells Brian Wall why improvement, recognition and celebration are key to our sector's success

The stars of stage and screen, feted for their achievements when they hold aloft a Golden Globe, Oscar or Olivier award, have every reason to celebrate their success. But none could be more proud of attaining such heights than the winners of the Best Factory Awards.

More low key those latter triumphs may well be, but the satisfaction they bring is no less evident. "To see teams of people at the awards presentations being absolutely delighted and ecstatic about winning is fantastic," says Richard Holland (pictured), managing director, UK and India, of TBM Consulting Group. "This is a real celebration of people succeeding at radically improving their business and it's a joy to be a part of that."

And a highly significant part TBM Consulting is proving to be, as it enters its sixth year of sponsoring the Most Improved Plant award within the Best Factory Awards. "There are not many occasions where you can join with your staff and celebrate achievement, but the awards are a wonderful opportunity for companies to do exactly that and to allow their people to get external recognition as well. TBM as a business is all about how such companies can dramatically develop and progress. From our point of view, we want to be involved in something that acknowledges this success."

Holland is quick to point out that such awards are not the goal per se, but the culmination of a long, hard process of sustained development. "Making large recognisable improvements within any business is tough. Those we engage with are constantly trying to set a target line on a particular metric, and then to close the gap between their current performance and that target. But when they hit it, the target gets moved and so they have to start all over again."

TBM works closely with businesses to help them along that path. "We sit down with those companies and together we identify what needs to be changed, in



order for them to reach their business goals. Because, when you are making such improvements, it's extremely important to link what you are doing to what is strategically right for that business.

"Many organisations take the view that continual improvement is a nice thing to do, if you have enough time on your hands after you've finished the day job. What we set out to show them is that it is the day job. We want to help them achieve dramatic improvements by making the step changes that need to happen to ensure business longevity – and to show them how this can be achieved quickly by engaging with their people and winning their trust. That has to be the starting point. Transforming the business and achieving its goals is what matters first and foremost – not bringing about change as a means to win an award."

At the same time, TBM encourages the companies it works with to enter the awards, he says, "because of the often remarkable advancements they have made,

which deserve to be recognised".

Moreover, he is acutely aware of the way that the BFAs play a key role in charting and measuring the progression of a business, often over several years. "One of the reasons we continue to sponsor the awards is on account of the rigorous and highly professional way they are managed. With all awards, there is a requirement to show clear improvement to bottom line metrics, which – along with making visual improvement to the shopfloor – is what TBM is all about, too.

"However, with the BFAs specifically, there is the added factor that the site will be visited and reviewed. And, in manufacturing, there is nowhere to hide. If you say you have done something to improve the business, it is absolutely clear whether you have or not. To succeed in these awards, therefore, those improvements have to be visible and demonstrable."

Such improvements are vital, he stresses, at a time when UK manufacturing is under increasing pressure, with many businesses seeing a drop in sales in the region of 20% or more.

The ones most likely to survive and thrive, he argues, are those that have already embraced lean principles and freed up labour as capacity has fallen, investing more creatively elsewhere and thus retaining the skills they have already developed, while managing cost. "Our purpose is to help them manage that change." ■



T: 01332 367378
www.tbmcg.com