



VERTICAL HARVEST

VERTICAL HARVEST MAKES *FAST COMPANY*'S FOURTH ANNUAL LIST OF THE BEST WORKPLACES FOR INNOVATORS DIVERSE INNOVATORS LIST

The urban vertical farming company joins Microsoft, T-Mobile, Adobe, PayPal, and many others in the *Fast Company* September 2022 awards issue

Jackson Hole, WY (August 3, 2022) – *Fast Company* announced its fourth annual **Best Workplaces for Innovators** list, honoring organizations and businesses that demonstrate a steadfast commitment to encouraging innovation at all levels. Vertical Harvest is a finalist in the Diverse Innovators category for its Grow Well employment program that is designed for accessibility and hiring practices developed for people with neurodiversity and disabilities.

Developed in collaboration with Accenture, the 2022 Best Workplaces for Innovators ranks 100 winners from a variety of industries, including computer science, biotech, consumer packaged goods, nonprofit, education, financial services, cybersecurity, engineering, diversity, sustainability, B2B, and consumer products and services. *Fast Company* editors and Accenture researchers worked together to score nearly 1,500 applications, and a panel of eight eminent judges reviewed and endorsed the top 100 companies.

Vertical Harvest is proud to operate with a truly integrated workforce (50/50) of people with and without disabilities under the umbrella of their Grow Well employment resources. This innovative approach to customized employment represents a profound rethinking of recruiting, hiring, training and retaining employees and making the labor market more inclusive and accessible. By designing jobs around an individual's unique abilities and resourcing appropriate accommodations, positive work experiences can become a reality for people who are often excluded from building meaningful careers. The idea is to understand what anyone needs to be at their best, so that everyone can show up and work better, together - which presents as an incredible opportunity to make the fast growing Controlled Environment Agriculture industry more accessible and equitable. As a sector CEA represents a \$4B engine for green jobs that can't be offshored and hold the promise to revitalize local food economies and increase nutrition security for urban communities.



Nona Yehia, co-founder and CEO of Vertical Harvest said, "One recent example of innovation was led by our General Manager, Chris Hogberg, and two of our differently abled employees Sean and Kai. The team redesigned an area in our greenhouse known as "Comp5" to double the growing space we previously had for petites and microgreens and generate 2x the yields in 2/3 of the space. With their ideas for design, they could drive crop density much higher and optimize growing time with a new approach to lighting and climate control. Additionally, they created improvements in the ergonomic experience for our workers which has made the harvesting and packaging operations even more efficient. Sean, who identifies as having a developmental disability and came to us as a full-time dishwasher, is now one of 5 or 6 people in the country with this kind of CEA systems design expertise. We believe that when we focus on ability vs disability, the sky's the limit."

Fast Company's Best Workplaces for Innovators issue (September 2022) is available online now, and the print issue will be on newsstands beginning August 16, 2022. To see the complete list, go to: <https://www.fastcompany.com/best-workplaces-for-innovators/list>

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