

MAYOR OF LONDON

# LONDON HEALTHY WORKPLACE AWARD



M&C SAATCHI UK CASE STUDY





## WHO WE ARE?

M&C Saatchi UK is a Soho-based branch of the M&C Saatchi Group, which is an independent global network of best-in-class brand and marketing specialists. In the UK we employ circa 1100 people, who are all dedicated to helping brands and businesses re-evaluate their marketing strategies according to our research to meet their customers' needs. For example, in one of our most recent campaigns we worked on the NHS Better Health movement. Motivated by the impacts of COVID-19, this movement aims to encourage the British population to try new, healthy habits in relation to their diet and physical activity to reduce their vulnerability to the virus and improve their overall health.

*"Through our work, we connect buyers and sellers as simply and as powerfully as possible due to our four defining principles: brutal simplicity and diversity of thought, independence, and ownership."*

## WHY WE TOOK PART IN THE LONDON HEALTHY WORKPLACE AWARD (LHWA)

As an organisation we strive to be the best in class for wellbeing for our employees by providing an environment that recognises and allows for the constant flux of life. As an organisation we have our employee's wellbeing at the forefront of our delivery of services and aim to demonstrate this through a variety of policies and initiatives ensuring every employee feels valued, considered, and heard. In October 2018 M&C Saatchi launched their wellbeing network, Together. The strategy was aimed at creating events and opportunities to open the dialogue around mental health and mental wellbeing for all employees. By May 2019, the company had a full Mental health First Aid programme implemented and was hosting regular events on mental health and resilience.



M&C Saatchi UK achieved the LHWA Foundations Award in 2019.

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The strategy included focussing on creative campaigns around mental health including The "Visual Diet" in collaboration with Marine Tanguy of MTArt Agency, an agency for visual artists, and photographer Rankin, showing the impact of selfie culture on mental health. In 2019 we also earned the Mayor's Good Work Standard (GWS) accreditation, which encouraged us to start several initiatives for employee wellbeing, for example:

- I. To incorporate our employees' views into our wellbeing action plans, we use audits of personnel data, desk assessments and engagement surveys. These focus on job quality, facilities, management / leadership styles, access to support, wellbeing and work life balance.
- II. To ensure that low-paid workers are supported to travel to work, we offer them cycle to work schemes and season ticket loans. Additionally, they also benefit from our gym membership discounts.
- III. To improve work effectiveness and comfort, we provide equipment tailored to the individual as well as the task being undertaken. This is based on user requests and professional input and may include the provision of ergonomic office chairs, footrests, separate keyboards, laptop stands etc.
- IV. To combat work-related stress, we put several measures in place, e.g. regular one-to-one catchups with employees, a core hours system, a buddy scheme, accessible information and support for managing stress, and an in-house psychotherapist.
- V. To encourage the continuous development of our line managers, they are all offered one-to-one training and coaching in basic people management skills, so that they could address aspects of the role they don't feel confident delivering or understanding.
- VI. To develop our employees, we provide on the job training through our buddy scheme, where employees not only gain competency skills, but they also feel integrated into the workforce. Professional qualifications are also offered regularly to employees funded by the organisation, e.g. CIPD Level 5 & 7 and ACA Accountancy qualifications.
- VII. To promote healthy eating, we created a healthy eating factsheet, which is available to all employees. We also offer a subsidised, in-house canteen that always serves a vegetarian and meat option alongside salads and home-

made sandwiches. Furthermore, we emphasise food variety to meet the needs of our diverse workforce.

We believe the LHWA will provide us with another great framework to guide us further in our journey of improving employee wellbeing and allow for us to develop the foundations we have already built through the GWS accreditation. As wellbeing is something that is continuously improvable, we feel that the feedback and review provided as part of the LHWA will be of great value to us, especially, in terms of spotting areas of improvement. As an organisation we do believe that we have built great foundations for wellbeing so to receive the award would be a great recognition for the work we have already done.

## WHAT WE DID AFTER LHWA SIGN-UP

The following sections summarise what we did after signing-up for the LHWA (before submitting our application) and what we have done since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to support our people.

### CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING

- I. To keep employee health and wellbeing constantly at the forefront of our senior managers' agenda, we appointed a Group People Director in 2018, who has been championing these issues in the business ever since.
- II. To maintain a high quality, environmentally friendly and accessible workplace environment, we provide break-out areas, prayer and nursing rooms, a healthy café and we have recently renovated our beverage and kitchen facilities.
- III. To ensure that employees on long-term sick leave are aware of all our internal and external support mechanisms, we stay in touch to provide information in relation to these. Furthermore, upon their return to work we conduct an interview with them to see if there is a need for providing any necessary adjustments, e.g. phased return, standing desk etc.
- IV. To provide relevant health and safety information, instruction and / or training to all employees, we rely on our health and safety steering group, safety signs and notices, user-friendly handbooks and our health and safety policy.

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## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

- I. We launched our highly successful Together Network, which is a committee that meets regularly to discuss and run events across the group surrounding mental health and wellbeing. For example, we recently had a panel talk on mental health stigma to encourage employees to open up about stress in the workplace and seek help.
- II. Employees' immediate line managers encourage having regular meetings at least once per month. Although, our open-door policies allow employees to request catchups in a frequent and informal way should they feel the need to.
- III. To ensure that employees are fairly rewarded for their work, bonuses and pay rises are awarded across all levels within the organisation. For example, we run quarterly salary benchmarks and we offer soft perks consisting of John Lewis Vouchers, free ice creams and arts classes.
- IV. To further develop our line managers' skill to notice signs of stress in their workforce and to provide support to employees dealing with stress, we provide Mental Health First Aid training.

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION

- I. To promote an active lifestyle, we also have social sport clubs – our Netball and 5 a side teams play weekly. Moreover, we have closed one of our lifts for a month to increase our employees' step counts, which helped us achieve the Fittest Advertising Agency in London 2018 award.
- II. Every workplace has access to a kitchen, which contains a sparkling and still water tap, 1L glass bottles and glasses for every employee to take and use as they please. There are also water dispensers placed throughout the floors, where employees can get fresh drinking water.
- III. Signs are posted throughout the buildings to make it clear that it is a smoke free area and disciplinary action is taken for any employees who don't adhere to this. As an organisation we are planning on holding an addiction themed month during October to coincide with Stoptober, which we will be encouraging employees to take part in.

- IV. Information on resources available to employees battling alcohol or drug misuse is readily available on the company intranet and on helpline cards located within all the toilets. We support employees facing addiction by providing BUPA Health Insurance to employees which would cover up to a maximum of 28 days of in-patient care such as rehabilitation.

## MAIN CHANGES SINCE COVID-19

### A. Risk Assessment and Action Planning

- I. A full risk assessment was undertaken of our office environment and home workers were asked to undertake DSE assessment where this had not previously been completed.
- II. Following the risk assessment, we followed government guidelines on making the workplace COVID-19 Secure in offices which included provision of hand sanitisers, one-way systems, adjustments of the internal environment to promote social distancing.

### B. Workforce Management

- I. During COVID-19, we kept our office open, however most of our workforce works from home.
- II. We introduced the 'Working Parents Policy', as we recognised the pressure parents face while juggling 'home school' and work. We aimed to create a flexible and more predictable workflow for parents by advising them on the length of meetings in advance and encouraging them to close their laptops and attend to their children whenever they need them. We are, after all, working in their homes.

### C. Social Distancing

- I. The office environment was changed to include one-way systems, re-location of desks and installation of screens where appropriate to maintain social distancing.

### D. Staff Wellbeing

- I. We conducted happiness surveys after major announcements issued by the government, or when an internal announcement was sent around to check employee attitudes and hear their feedback. Accordingly, the results of these surveys informed our policymaking that aimed to assist

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employees and ensure that their needs were met in these novel and dynamic circumstances.

- II. We replaced our phone counselling service with an online version delivered through the Qwell app, which turned out to be more popular, especially among younger employees.
- III. We also introduced the Vault app – a whistleblowing app for domestic abuse – to provide support to those employees, who might be affected by it. The app serves as a secure, anonymous platform to report abuse or raise concerns about it. In this endeavour, we also rely on colleagues of those possibly subjected to domestic abuse to speak up via the app, if they see something unusual that implies abuse.
- IV. One of the things we did was give advice on the length of meetings and put a maximum of 45 minutes on meetings, so people with children at home could better balance work and family responsibilities.

## HOW WE COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE INITIATIVES

Change within the organisation is communicated via group emails or quarterly agency meetings. This is supplemented by newsletters from the Networks.

## OUR NEXT STEPS BEYOND THE AWARD

To adapt our working practices in the best way to meet the needs of staff, we are undergoing reviews of the following:

- Onboarding of employees 'virtually'
- The development of junior employees
- Maintaining company culture
- Employees relocating and employing people from different places
- Recruitment processes
- Continuing support even when things are back to 'normal'

As the needs of the low paid workers is an area of focus, we are in the process of looking to become a certified London Living Wage employer.

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