

Best Idea to Engage Colleagues

Winner

Ogilvy Health



This award recognises workplaces that have developed simple, creative ways to engage colleagues with mental wellbeing. Judges looked for a clearly outlined idea and an example of its effectiveness

Lockdown ended but the effects continued. Ogilvy Health was adjusting to the challenges of hybrid working, in addition to 66 new joiners from Q4 2020 and through 2021, accounting for 37% of staff. Mental and physical health were top of mind, as was company culture.

The company asked how it could encourage people to take breaks from their screens and move more after the pandemic modus operandi of sitting for hours. It wanted its staff to connect, get to know, support, and inspire each other, rebuilding the dynamic culture that Ogilvy Health had pre-lockdown. What would work for everybody, or the vast majority, not just the few?

The team settled on walking as an activity that would be accessible to most. But not just walking – Walking with Purpose. Fuelled by images of their senior leaders strutting along the high street wiggling their hips, they turned to race walking.

The more they looked into race walking, the more they began to realise it's a real sport, with lots of skill involved. If they could get a pro to coach them... Cue Tom Bosworth, Olympian and world race walking record holder. Once Ogilvy Health's Strength & Conditioning Coach Ben Leach secured his involvement, the team were committed.

The initiative launched at Ogilvy Health's meeting on 26th January – everybody automatically enrolled, with the option to



opt out. 'Gameplay' involved being randomly assigned to teams, team naming, and top teams winning money for their chosen charity, a weekly leaderboard of kilometres walked and XPs (extra points) earned.

Regular walking was the main activity, race-walking training with Tom earned XPs. Thus, the team maximised involvement but still had the salient image element of people wiggling up their high street. The team set – and set out to collectively walk to their Sydney office. Tom filmed 10 mobile-first video pieces that taught race walking. Interim in-person training in Regent's Park helped give first-hand (incentivised) training with a world champion. Ogilvy Health's Strength & Conditioning Coach coached them, in-person, every other Wednesday, while the Brain Sciences Centre incorporated six behavioural change techniques (Salience, Defaults, Messenger, Ego, Norms, Incentives) in a programme of 16 XP initiatives over eight weeks to maintain participation.





Inspired by world record race walker Tom Bosworth, the team got into their stride

To secure feedback, Ogilvy Health launched a survey with incentivised XP completion - receiving the highest survey feedback ever! Strava collected data, published in a leaderboard at the beginning of each week. Via Strava, team members encouraged one another with kudos and pics. Kilometres and competitive spirits took off. The event concluded on 16th March, starting with the race-walking finale in Regent's Park, then to the London HQ for the final leaderboard reveal and prize-giving.

Achievements

In quantitative terms, 153 people participated, 16,983 kilometres were walked, 932,100 calories burnt (equivalent to 36,268 Big Macs) and 86,445 metres climbed (10 Mount Everests). £1,750 went to charities. Staff member Noyala walked 818.7km, while team 'Sydney Strutters' walked 2,340km. Jenny climbed 4,372 metres (that's Table Mountain - she works remotely in Cape Town). Plus the company had more people in the office for the big reveal than they'd had since February 2020.

As physical fitness improved, the team felt the difference in their posture, breathing and energy. They slept better, and anxiety reduced. Just as important was the social side - the feeling of team and competitive spirit forged bonds beyond work deadlines, improving dynamics within teams and reducing feelings of isolation. How do you measure the laughs and camaraderie? ■

Judges' comments

✦ This resonated as a way of bringing people together. It's teams of five so no one was ever alone. Psychologically, it just feels like it's the right fit. Amazing. It's a great anxiety-reducer.

✦ Such a specific and simple idea but one that everyone can get their head round and really helps! Fresh thinking, guys

✦ This is a great idea - I want to get this going where I work now as it sounds like so much fun was had by you all

Highly Commended

- dunnhumby
- Wave



Shortlisted

- Northern Trust (two initiative shortlisted)
- Schroders Personal Wealth

