

Most Successful Culture Change in the Workplace

Winner

EssenceMediacom



This award recognises an organisation that can demonstrate a culture shift among its staff, creating an open and positive mental wellbeing environment

Women going through menopause is the fastest-growing workforce demographic, with three-quarters likely to experience the transition during their working life. Despite this, as many as one in 10 women will leave the workplace around the time they are in perimenopause or menopause. There is evidence, however, that a work culture that offers support and empathetic allyship means women are more able to continue to thrive in their careers.

Looking to better support the 55% of its workforce who are women, EssenceMediacom recognised it needed to take action to educate everyone, regardless of gender, about the struggles posed by menopause and for those experiencing menopausal changes to have dedicated one-to-one support. The judges praised EssenceMediacom for its “plan to address a critical need, which is still very rarely addressed at workplaces”.

Historically there is a bias within the media sector towards younger employees. EssenceMediacom strove to break this discrimination by focusing on older workers, making equitable opportunities available and making sure everyone is supported with their wellbeing and on their career journey.

It set up a dedicated team, which reviewed and updated its policies surrounding menopause, aiming to create a programme of events and coaching to raise awareness

and support affected employees, educate all employees and train managers so they were confident advising those in need.

To deliver this, it piloted one-to-one coaching for eight staff with menopause support practitioners from Over the Bloody Moon, providing performance coaching at a time that is challenging to navigate in individuals’ personal and professional lives.

Alongside this bespoke individual support, the media agency ran Lunch and Learn sessions for the wider company, which focused on raising awareness and destigmatising menopause. These sessions were open to all ages and genders, as the company wanted all employees to feel able to be allies and have open discussions about menopause and support for mid-life women.

It also built a community of menopause champions from across the WPP network who help to raise awareness and provide a safe listening space and champion menopause initiatives.

The company partnered with other businesses in the WPP group, as well as Brixton Finishing School and the Unvisibility Project, to create the Visible Start training programme, designed to upskill midlife women who want to return to the workplace or change industry after a career break. It also teamed up with Henpicked and began working towards





Mediacom Chief People Officer Elaine Bremner recognised many women find menopause symptoms debilitating, and that this posed a risk of the business losing valuable staff

becoming a menopause-friendly accredited employer.

Achievements

The one-to-one coaching with Over the Bloody Moon menopause support practitioners had an immediate beneficial effect on lives and careers of women within the organisation.

One of the recipients of the coaching, EssenceMediacom Managing Director Nicola Marsh, said: "Menopause coaching is not only an amazing tool to help you, but also a clear demonstration the business you work for both values you and acknowledges there are changes beyond your control that you may need support with." Following feedback from the eight women who took part, EssenceMediacom is now rolling out the tailored coaching across the company.

The Lunch and Learn sessions also had an immediate impact, with 76% of participants feeling "very knowledgeable" after attending, compared with 86% feeling they understood menopause "not much" or "not at all" beforehand. Before the sessions, 91% did not feel equipped to support colleagues but after the sessions, 76% felt "very" or "extremely" equipped to support colleagues.

The judges highlighted the results of both the coaching and education efforts, saying: "They went for the focus and the stats off the back of this were immense." ■

Judges' comments

- ✦ They went for the focus and the stats off the back of this were immense
- ✦ This is a targeted programme that went above and beyond.
- ✦ Good holistic approach
- ✦ Great impact
- ✦ Good robust strategy and plan to address a critical need, which is still very rarely addressed at workplaces

Shortlisted

→ Ogilvy UK

→ PeopleUnboxed in partnership with Rentokil Initial

