


Most Inspiring Mental Wellbeing Champion/Ally

Winner

Vikky Goodwin, VolkerRail



This award allows companies to recognise an outstanding Champion or Ally who has shown dedication in supporting their colleagues. This individual will have demonstrated their ability to go above and beyond

 Vikky is Lead Mental Health Champion at railway infrastructure contractor VolkerRail. In addition to her day job as Lead Document Controller in the company's signalling division, she works with more than 40 Mental Health Champions within the company to support its 1,150 employees' wellbeing.

VolkerRail has a male-dominated workforce, who are often required to spend long periods away from home and work unsociable hours. Mental health accounts for more than 40% of health problems experienced in the rail sector.

Vikky has focused her efforts on the specific challenges faced by VolkerRail's workforce, and has worked to create a more open atmosphere, where colleagues are encouraged to notice their own behaviours and discuss how they're feeling.

Vikky pioneered the Building Relationships On Site (BROS) programme, which has changed the working environment at the company, making previously uncomfortable conversations feel comfortable. She built the programme with guidance from eight construction managers and six supervisors, with whom she discussed what the company could do differently to account for staff's working patterns and locations.

BROS is based on the concept of colleagues looking out for each other when on location. "These workers all travel, work and live



Vikky harnessed the way teams communicate when working together to cut through to a traditionally hard-to-reach audience

together – if they can notice their own behaviour, that makes a huge difference to their working environment and support," as Vikky put it. The programme built on workers' usual ways of communicating and working together, harnessing that connection for the cause of promoting mental wellbeing.

Vikky uses presentations to show colleagues how changes to a person's usual behaviour can indicate something weighing on their minds, helping staff both build



their own self-awareness and notice when something is not right with a colleague. Vikky also models how to approach mental health conversations in such a way as to dispense with any awkwardness and make both parties feel comfortable.

In the year since its launch, the BROS initiative has been successfully briefed to more than 80% of the business.

Judges were impressed by Vikky's passion for mental health, as well as the vision to put the framework for the BROS programme in place. She takes time to make sure the Champions too are properly looked after, and her approach has empowered workers throughout the company to make it a more mentally healthy place to work.

Judges also praises her understanding of the business, her use of data to inform strategy and her use of the BROS acronym and concept as a hook to engage a traditionally masculine workforce. The level of change she has been able to effect as a woman working in a man's world, with a limited budget, makes her achievements even more impressive.

They also noted the way Vikky has highlighted a huge problem that exists across the construction industry, which the male-dominated workforce and sometimes macho culture help to make a hotspot for poor mental health.

Achievements

BROS had an instantly positive effect proven by "a flourish of men who will come and discuss their mental health, even just personal life or other situations," says Vikky. "It's become a lot more of an open atmosphere." Small changes to behaviours among staff have led to a reduction in mental health-related reported sickness.

The success of the BROS initiative has been recognised by railway infrastructure operator Network Rail, technology provider Siemens, building contractor Skanska and transport and engineering consultancy Systra. All these organisations have taken part in Vikky's presentations, and have requested information from her with a view to developing similar programmes of their own. Systra briefed BROS at its Northwest and Central best practices event last year. ■



✦ I like Vikky. I'm not working shifts out on my own somewhere. People are empowered to spot differences in their colleagues at all times of the day. She's a woman in a man's world and is really working to make the difference. She's creating huge behavioural change and impact.

✦ She just has the passion and the vision. She might have had the highest mountain to climb. She has created a huge impact. She's taken on a quadruple challenge at once – she's one to remember. On the roads and on dark nights is a different story

Highly Commended

→ Brenda Nell,
Motability
Operations

Shortlisted

→ Kendall Turner
Lennon,
LexisNexis

→ Matthew Fautley,
Schroders
Personal Wealth