

Best Initiative to Engage Colleagues

THIS CAN
GLOBAL AWARDS
2025

HAPPEN.

in association with
A&O SHEARMAN

Winner// FRESHFIELDS

This award recognises creative and effective ways to engage colleagues in mental wellbeing initiatives.

The shift to hybrid working brought new challenges for Freshfields, particularly around maintaining connection, motivation, and wellbeing across dispersed teams. Workplace health data revealed that 27% of the workforce were moderately inactive and 43% inactive, according to Public Health England standards. Engagement with existing wellbeing tools – such as the Calm app – was also low, with only 12% of employees registered.

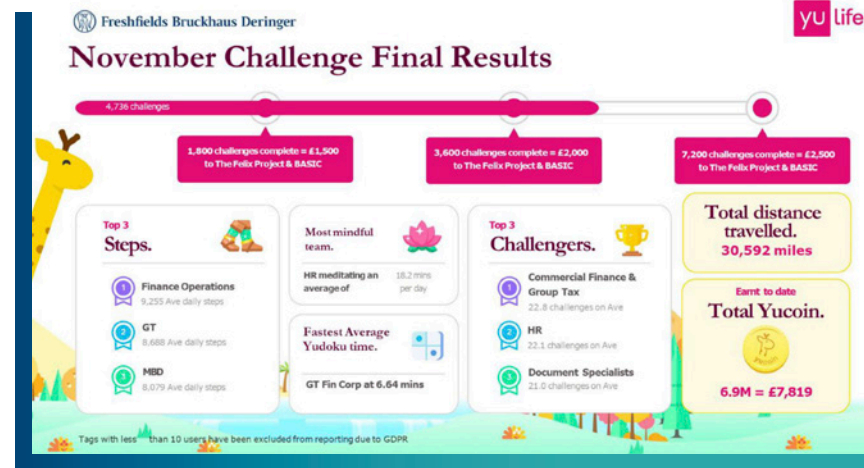
Determined to re-energise its 1,600 UK colleagues and strengthen the sense of belonging across offices, Freshfields sought a fresh, inclusive approach to wellbeing that combined healthy habits with social connection. The result was an innovative, gamified initiative designed to bring people together while improving both physical and mental health.

The use of gamification has achieved levels of engagement that have surpassed our expectations.

Reconnecting Through Play and Purpose

Partnering with YuLife, Freshfields introduced a wellbeing challenge that turned small, everyday actions – walking, meditating, problem-solving – into fun, rewarding experiences. Participants earned virtual rewards redeemable for vouchers or charity donations, fostering both motivation and social impact.

A 30-day firmwide competition, announced by the COO and supported through weekly updates, fuelled engagement across departments with leaderboards, charitable goals, and local office challenges. Wellbeing “champions” and employee networks



The number of challenges colleagues completed during a campaign

encouraged participation at every level.

Following its success, the firm launched themed campaigns such as Earth Month and an inter-firm “Legal League” competition, with challenges timed around winter months to sustain morale and energy.

Results & Impact

The initiative delivered record engagement: 51% of colleagues downloaded YuLife (11% above benchmark) and 34% use it daily, with Calm app usage increasing from 12% to 34% in just three months. Physical activity rose significantly – a 16% increase in daily steps – and

in-app physical challenges more than doubled, with half now completed during lunchtime hours.

Colleagues also channelled their progress into tangible good: 1,310 trees planted, 1,543 meals donated, 575 weeks of clean water provided, and £4,000 raised for local charities. ■

Judges' comments

- + This is a fabulous initiative where people have taken up the challenge to change their daily habits.
- + Great to see such measurable uplift in activity levels and movement during lunch hours!

SHORTLISTED

- Experian
- NatWest