

Best New Workplace Approach to Mental Health

Winner

Wellbeing at Mercedes-Benz, Mercedes-Benz Cars UK

This award is given to a workplace that has recently recognised explicitly the importance of addressing mental health, and within the past 18 months has taken first steps to change the culture

It's common knowledge that employee wellbeing is inextricably linked to better engagement, business performance and customer satisfaction. So, you'd expect a large organisation such as Mercedes-Benz Cars UK (MBC UK) to have a formal employee wellbeing strategy in place. Unfortunately, this wasn't the case. Whilst employee wellbeing had always been a topic at MBC UK, it had largely sat in the shadows, with just a few sparse articles in the weekly newsletter and sporadic events. In hindsight, the company realises this approach was outdated to say the least.

In early 2019, a team of likeminded individuals, recognising the need to bring the topic to the forefront of the business, came together to overhaul wellbeing at MBC UK. However, a lack of clear direction meant that by the end of 2019, very little had been implemented. Then Covid-19 hit. Employees were understandably concerned about themselves/loved ones. Developing its employee wellbeing offering became mission-critical at MBC UK.

The team needed a strategy that was truly sustainable long-term. Eight "champions" (four directors and four employees) were appointed and empowered to make changes without board-level sign-off. They then researched what employees might want to see from the programme.



They also encouraged managers to have ongoing conversations with their teams so as to keep the programme agile and responsive to employee needs.

The champions then formulated a comprehensive strategy based on four key pillars: Physical, Mental, Financial and Nutritional. The day-to-day running of the programme was the responsibility of just two of the eight champions. With Covid ruling out any big launch event, they had to find creative ways to bring the wellbeing initiative to life. They recruited a handful of passionate advocates as employee wellbeing influencers to help them spread the word – this "wellbeing culture group" is now 43-strong.

The group has produced all its own content in-house, including employee-led podcasts, fireside chats and a wellbeing



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The Mercedes wellbeing programme shifted to shine a light on four core pillars – Physical, Mental Health, Financial and Nutrition, introducing a host of content and initiatives to support employees.

social intranet page. Downloadable wellbeing e-cards were made available throughout the pandemic and were designed to open conversations and remove stigmas. Senior leadership have also made themselves approachable.

Other initiatives included access to apps, medical services, webinars and employee benefits. The company also created a separate wellbeing brand to help make wellbeing accessible and engaging.

Achievements

The team at MBC UK were delighted with the take-up of the programme. Employees have engaged enthusiastically. Impressive numbers have participated in mindfulness programmes and fireside chats, and 60% have used the financial wellness programme. Many staff have also been accessing Mental Health First Aider support and wellbeing podcasts.

One of the team’s goals was for the programme to result in a decrease in overall absence, leavers and resignations, along with increase in employee engagement and productivity. Absence including absence due to stress, is down by 20%, as is the number of leavers. The company has also seen a 5% increase in employee engagement, and a pulse survey showed employees know what’s expected of them and feel equipped to do their role. The programme has outperformed the team’s expectations and put the foundations in place for MBC UK to support its staff over the coming months and years. ■



Judges' comments

+ Excellent to see this is definitely not a knee-jerk campaign but something strategic and being implemented for sustainable long-term success.

+ Fantastic and well-rounded entry.

+ You’re clearly committed to creating a healthy workplace that is employee-led, has senior leadership engagement, dedicated online space for wellbeing and champions to raise awareness and provide support.

+ The team at Mercedes-Benz have built a brilliant foundation on which to continue to support and empower their employees. A great entry.

Highly Commended

→ Chipper Cash Wellbeing Strategy
CHIPPER CASH



Shortlisted

→ Winning with wellbeing – Global wellbeing strategy
AVANADE

→ Be Kind to Your Mind
HAVAS

→ **NEOM**

→ **UNIPART GROUP LTD**

