

Best Mental Health in the Workplace Strategy:

MULTINATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Winner

Approach to Workplace Mental Health, Northern Trust

This award recognises workplaces that have implemented a strategy to strengthen mental health in two or more countries, resulting in company-wide cultural change yet recognising local cultural differences

Northern Trust is a multi-faceted financial services provider with global reach. The company has always understood that a good mental health strategy is critical to business performance. In Asia particularly there are still a lot of preconceived notions around mental health. The pandemic has heightened the focus on mental health for businesses globally and Northern Trust recognised that it needed to factor in wellbeing when looking into the future of work.

The company's strategy set out to build mental health amongst employees and provide managers with the wherewithal to signpost and support employees experiencing mental health conditions. It also looked to create a culture of wellbeing and psychological safety.

In Asia, the company ran a storyboard campaign involving a character named Sky who opens a mind gym, called "Sky is the Limit*" in partnership with an external organisation. The team decided to take an approach that made no reference to people, in order to avoid preconceived notions around diversity and mental health. Every Wednesday Sky meets with peer animal characters Penguin, Owlle, Doggo and Slothie to discuss topics such as stress, anxiety and depression.

Over the past year Northern Trust's



The Sky is the Limit* campaign used animal characters to avoid preconceptions around diversity

mental health programmes have been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, with webinars focused on topics such as protecting your Mental Health during Covid-19, Supporting Your Family's Well-Being during Lockdown, and Coping with Loss during Covid-19.

Northern Trust has 300 Mental Health First Aid champions in London, approximately 150 champions in Ireland and 50 champions in Guernsey. These champions share articles and resources, and meet quarterly to share best practice and experiences. In Asia Northern Trust has 21 champions

Highly Commended

in the Philippines and 36 in India. Plans are under way to train 12 in Australia, 53 in India and 30 in the Hong Kong office, and to run shorter courses for junior managers.

The company also launched a global mental health site on its intranet, while its Employee Assistance Programme offers 24/7 confidential counselling to employees and family members. It partnered with an external expert to highlight the challenges faced by carers. World Mental Health Day was recognised across the company globally, and Northern Trust sponsored groundbreaking research on Embracing Mental Health in the Workplace in Asia, in partnership with Community Business.

Achievements

In Europe, Northern Trust was awarded a Bronze in 2018 and Silvers in 2019 and 2020 by the UK's Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index. In Asia, feedback on the Sky is the Limit* campaign showed 88% agreeing it had helped them appreciate the importance of mental health. Seventy-five per cent said it would help them achieve their own goals, while 88% said they would apply learnings and 80% will likely recommend this initiative to others.

Open-house sessions across Asia were attended by an average of 200 employees, with feedback returning a satisfaction score of 95%, 98 saying they found the content relevant and helpful and 95% saying they would apply the learnings. The campaign was recognized as a finalist for the 2020 D&I Pioneering Initiative Awards by Community Business Asia.

Northern Trust will continue to seek feedback from its employees to address gaps in its mental health support arrangements. The company's journey is one of progressive realisation. ■

Judges' comments



Amazing creativity. Really enjoyed reading about this creative approach, especially to focus and target the younger workforce.



A great number of examples on support and awareness – holding a number of webinars and workshops to increase awareness, focusing on different groups and being inclusive in this. Has a large and structured MHFA network, complemented by a mental health site on the intranet. Really like the creativity of Sky is the Limit* campaign.



* Created and designed by Mithra Trust

→ HSBC Group Wellbeing

Shortlisted

→ Global Mental Health Strategy
Accenture

→ Thrive Global Rollout 2020/21
Dunnhumby

→ Global Employee Mental Wellness & Engagement Initiative
Flywire