

Best Targeted Mental Health Initiative

Winner

Ogilvy MPower,
Ogilvy UK



This category celebrates mental health initiatives that workforces have implemented either for a specific group of employees, or to solve a particular workplace challenge

Ogilvy is a creative communications agency with 61% of the staff identifying as female. In 2019 the agency launched its menopause policy. In 2020 it celebrated Menopause Awareness Day with a webinar featuring three experts in their fields talking about peri/menopause, and two brave women telling their stories. The agency also published the second edition of its policy, with an enhanced private medical offering. Anecdotal evidence indicated that women “were not coping well with symptoms”, “didn’t know what to do”, “felt they were no longer fit to do their jobs” and wanted either “to leave or go part-time”. Ogilvy knew it needed to deliver a complete package for menopause. It needed to educate, embed and engage – not only with those experiencing symptoms, but also with line managers and teams. The goal was to encourage them to have open conversations and start to de-stigmatise this natural stage of life, helping Ogilvy keep its talent and support wellbeing.

Ogilvy’s menopause strategy educates all staff, supports those experiencing peri/menopause and aims to reduce any stigma associated. The aim is to increase wellbeing and to retain our talent. Menopausal women make up a huge percentage of the UK workforce, and a staggering one in four will resign or not take a promotion during this natural stage of life due to lack of support and

BECCI FIELD
Putting a face to menopause

What was it that made you realise you were going through peri/menopause?

I had my two children at 39 and 41, so being medically labelled an ‘older mum’ masked my diagnosis for several years.

The crushing exhaustion, painful stiff joints and hiccups mood swings I experienced in my early 40s was just blamed on juggling 2 small children alongside a busy, full-time job each time I went to my GP. I knew it was something more. As other symptoms crept in - heart palpitations, night sweats, intense sugar cravings, relentless sleepless nights and brain fog, I started to do my own research.

The more I read and talked to other women at Ogilvy, I realised it was all caused by perimenopause and my loss of oestrogen.

Do you use medication to regulate your symptoms?

After years of herbal remedies, now aged 49 I’ve been on HRT for the last 6 months and life is starting to feel more manageable again.

My joints no longer scream, my sleep is more peaceful and my moods are less erratic. I’m not completely symptom free but the clouds are definitely parting and I’m starting to smile again.

MPOWER
Empowering. Conversations. Menopause.

FIONA UWAGWU
Putting a face to menopause

What was it that made you realise you were going through peri/menopause?

I had no idea what was happening. I’d been living in a hot country so I thought randomly getting hot and sweaty and waking up in the middle of the night cool I was so hot was normal.

It was only when I got back home to the UK and was having lunch with a friend and the symptoms started that it was pointed out to me. By then it felt normal so I didn’t think about it, but she called it out and asked me. And suddenly it seemed so very obvious. Even more obvious was the fact that I could have gone for a medical diagnosis much sooner had I known.

What do you wish someone had told you about peri/menopause?

It does feel like we need to know about this when we are being educated about female menstrual health in our early teens.

The reason I say that is because the peri menopause symptoms can start at any time, especially while still having periods. There are a number of symptoms to be aware of, if taken in isolation might seem incidental, but when you start to experience several of them at the same time, are important. Most women miss them and go through a lot of unpleasant symptoms out of ignorance.

MPOWER
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MPOWER’s strategy included putting faces to the menopause around the office in a bid to humanise the topic

or confidence. Ogilvy's motivation was to ensure this statistic was not replicated at the organisation.

The agency aimed to have a best-in-class policy to educate, reassure, protect and support employees, and to offer enhanced medical support and guidance. This would include creating a peer-to-peer support group, and raising awareness of menopause and its impact in the workplace and beyond. Ogilvy wanted to facilitate reasonable adjustments for all employees, whether in the office or working from home. It also aimed to humanise menopause by putting faces to this around the office, creating a network of allies to provide day-to-day support. It set a target of achieving The Menopause Friendly Accreditation by early 2023.

Ogilvy wanted to ensure everyone experiencing peri/menopause had the right medical support. After two years' service, then every year thereafter, all employees have free access to the BUPA Menopause Annual Health Plan. It includes 45 minutes with a menopause-trained GP. Before two years' service all employees have access to a menopause nurse. Everyone now has access to perimenopause and menopause coaching.

The agency set up MPower as a group for those who are experiencing peri/menopause. It offers members a chance to share experiences, hear from leading experts and have access to additional support resources. Within this community are MPower Champions, women who have navigated menopause. Many of these are senior leaders.

Achievements

In a 2021 employee survey 88% of employees felt the company looked after the wellbeing of employees and 94% said managers were responsive to needs and life outside work, such as attending medical appointments. Feedback on the medical support and menopause coaching has been positive, and 98 employees have accessed the menopause resource hub. Feedback on the MPower Champions and Faces of Menopause also indicated opening this conversation in the office was helpful and a positive step in reducing the stigma around peri/menopause. ■



+ Ogilvy responded to a shocking statistic and has meaningfully sought to influence a reduction in the number of women who will resign or not accept promotions during menopause.

+ Love this, especially the inclusion of managers' training and promoting the service to all.

+ This package of wellbeing support is broad-ranging, offers peer-to-peer and professional information and guidance that is accessible via multiple platforms and address key concerns raised internally, which is fantastic.

+ The clear and detailed results demonstrate a strategy that drives and will embed and sustain long-term wellbeing support.

Highly Commended

- Accenture Menowarriers
ACCENTURE UK
- Britain Get Talking - the better we talk, the better we feel
ITV



Shortlisted

- Talk 4 Health: Deepening colleague connection & improving wellbeing through a peer-to-peer counselling program for remote workers
C SPACE
- dhThrive within D&I
DUNNHUMBY
- Menopause support in the workplace
SANTANDER UK

