

# GREAT WORKPLACES

GREAT PLACE TO WORK® SPECIAL REPORT 2015

[www.greatplacetowork.co.uk](http://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk)

## Which companies have made this year's ranking?

The best small, medium and large workplaces

## Number crunching

Where do small companies outperform large organisations?



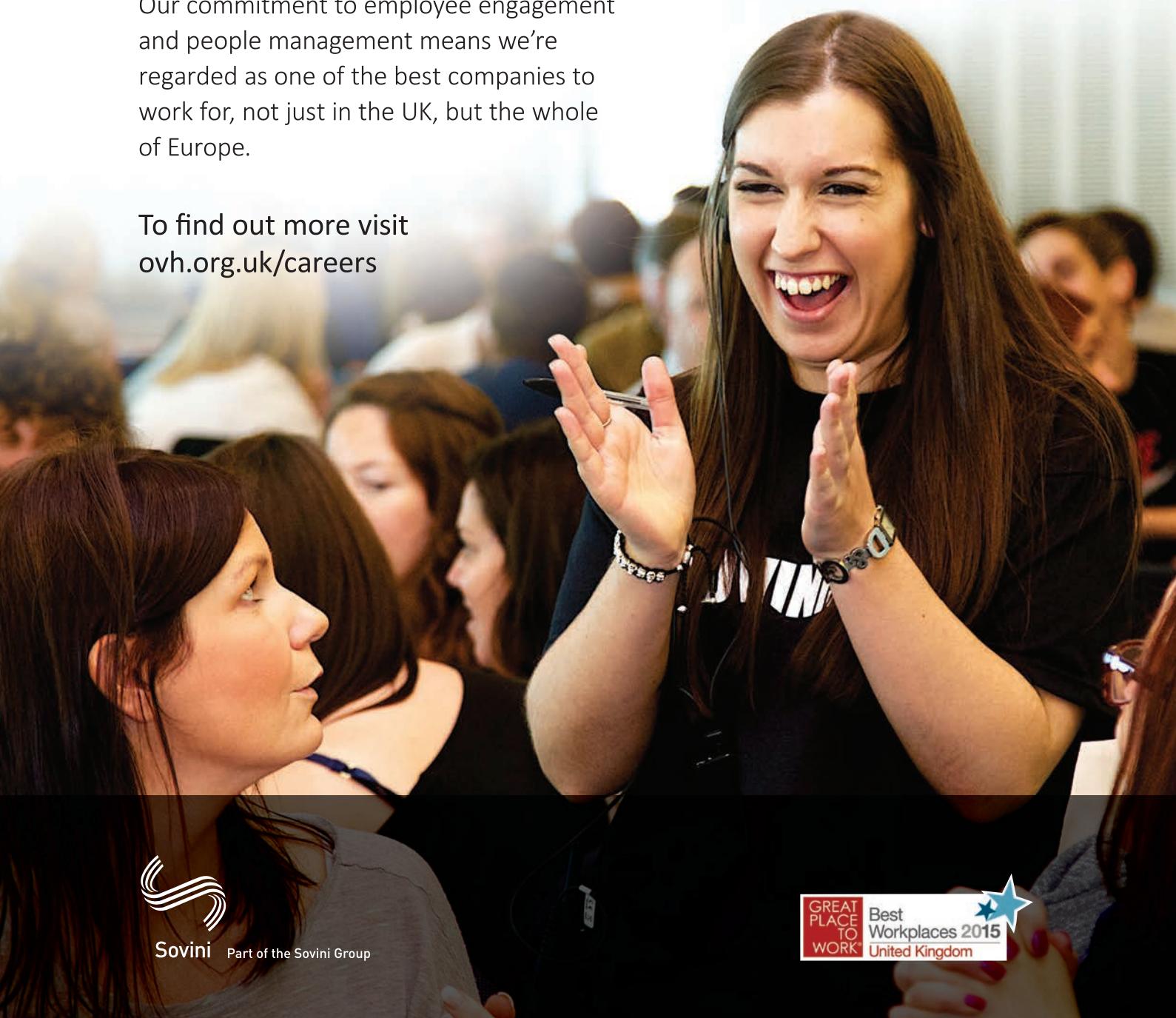
## How to get from good to great – and stay there

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### EDITORIAL

Redactive Publishing Ltd, Great Place to Work®

### SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE

Paul Wade

### SALES MANAGER

Giorgio Romano

### GROUP SALES DIRECTOR

John Seaman

### DIRECTOR

Joanna Marsh

### ANALYSIS

Marianna Roach, Suzy Lee, Musteyde Firket and Anusha Maheshwari

### GREAT PLACE TO WORK® INSTITUTE UK

Anna Nurzynska, Anusha Maheshwari, Ben Gautrey, Charles Fair, Dee Abiola, Elliot Slade, Emdad Khan, Filip Kitundu, Helen Wright, Jonathan Reid, Marianna Roach, Mathew Hellela, Matthew Dunbar, Musteyde Fikret, Nick Honour, Nicola Papenfus, Sam Merchant, Sonya Bedi, Suzy Lee and Tom O'Byrne

### EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

Dr. Petrina Carmody and Phil Wilson

### PUBLISHED BY

Redactive Publishing Ltd, 17-18 Britton Street, London, EC1M 5TP, Tel +44 (0) 20 7880 6200

### DISTRIBUTED BY

The Guardian  
The Sunday Telegraph

### FRONT COVER

Alex-Chilton Design/Redactive Publishing Ltd

## TOM O'BYRNE

## LEADER

With engagement levels in the UK generally reported at around 30% it's clear that there is significant room for improvement. A key barrier is people. People create the culture where engagement can flourish and managers directly influence engagement by the way they treat their employees.

In the section that starts on p4 we see how some managers are more likely to drive employees to polish up their CVs while others make employees' working lives a pleasure. And isn't that what most of us want out of work — to enjoy it? The benefit of course is that engaged employees are more productive.

Size is also used as a barrier, which we discuss on pages 4 to 9. Organisations are either too small to have the resources they need to be really effective in their engagement strategies or too large to create the collaborative teamwork that is the hallmark of an engaged workforce. We've delved into our data to look at the evidence. What we've found may surprise you.

While there is no magic recipe for success, there is one key ingredient for engagement: trust. While we've known its importance for more than 20 years, its strategic significance to the UK economy is growing and was given a welcome boost by the CBI, which dubbed 2014 'the year of trust'.

The facts speak for themselves. Looking at our 2014 data, there's a massive gap of 45 percentage points in the levels of trust between the top and bottom performing organisations.

Our 2015 Best Workplaces have been able to demonstrate high levels of trust and engagement. The message is simple: trust and engagement is for all organisations, whatever size, sector or type. When you read our Best Workplace's stories, we're sure there'll be something to inspire you.

**Tom O'Byrne, Chief Executive,  
Great Place to Work® UK**



**While there's no magic recipe for success, there is one key ingredient for engagement: trust**

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# NUMBER CRUNCHING

The organisation behind the Best Workplaces ranking – the Great Place to Work® Institute – has a wealth of data on its high-trust, high-performing organisations...

## DOES SIZE MATTER?

Smaller companies claim that employee engagement is easier for larger organisations. They have the resources and the brand to attract and retain talent. But, larger organisations claim engagement is simpler for smaller organisations – they have flatter structures, decision making is quicker and collaboration, innovation and support can be easier in smaller workforces. So what is the truth?

**The biggest areas of difference in our data are in talent management, job security and a surprising difference in reward. Every time, employees in smaller organisations rate their employers higher.**



Company size	Talent management	Job security	Reward
Large (500+ employees)	65%	71%	57%
Medium (50-499 employees)	72%	76%	60%
Small (20-49 employees)	85%	89%	72%

Percentages are Trust Index® scores

## What does this tell us?

- Smaller organisations are **better at attracting the right people and performance managing them**, for example through learning and development opportunities and fair promotions.

- Reward is always a low-scoring area, but small organisations **still perform better than larger**.
- Job security is surprisingly higher in a smaller organisation**, contrary to expectation. For example, employees at one organisation (20 people), agreed to a pay cut to help the business out at a difficult time, rather than lose staff.



Training and developing our people has been at the heart of what we do throughout the 40 years that we've been in the UK.

We believe the investment we make in our people is good for them, good for our business and ultimately good for our customers.

McDonald's

# PEOPLE

[mcdonalds.co.uk/people](http://mcdonalds.co.uk/people)



'You walk in as a new member of staff and feel welcome and part of something special'

## MANAGEMENT TODAY

It's often said that people join an organisation but leave a manager. One key ingredient for **managing people effectively is trust**.

**Trust builds and sustains the positive relationships between manager and employees** (and between employees), and drives engagement. And engagement drives individual, team and business performance.

So, it should come as no surprise that **high-trust, top performing organisations have better performing managers**.



This is the gap between the top 10 Best Workplaces and the bottom 10 unranked organisations when it comes to managers **keeping their promises** and their **actions matching their words**.

## MANAGERS – TOP 10 TRUSTWORTHY BEHAVIOURS

Looking at our top 10 Best Workplaces and bottom 10 unranked organisations, there are **large gaps** in how employees rate managers' delivery of these key behaviours:



- 1 Keeping promises or commitments
- 2 Actions matching words
- 3 Assigning and co-ordinating people well
- 4 Involving people in decisions that affect them
- 5 Genuinely seeking out and responding to suggestions and ideas
- 6 Showing sincere interest in employees as people
- 7 Showing appreciation for good work and extra effort
- 8 Hiring people who fit in well
- 9 Being competent at running the business
- 10 Having a clear view of where the business is going, and how to get there

**96% OF EMPLOYEES AT OUR TOP 10 BEST WORKPLACES LOOK FORWARD TO COMING TO WORK** 😊 **COMPARED WITH 32% IN THE BOTTOM 10 UNRANKED ORGANISATIONS** 😞

## HOW TRUST AFFECTS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Trust Index® survey statements relating to engagement	Top 10 Best Workplaces (Trust Index® scores)	Bottom 10 unranked organisations (Trust Index® scores)	Difference
'This is a great place to work'	<b>98%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>55</b>
'I would recommend working here to others'	<b>98%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>54</b>
'People here are willing to give extra to get the work done'	<b>95%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>44</b>
'I'm proud to tell others I work here'	<b>98%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>42</b>
'I want to work here a long time'	<b>93%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Employee engagement levels:</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>42</b>

## A GENDER GAP?

Gender can make a difference to how people perceive their workplace.



### WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO AGREE WITH THESE STATEMENTS:

"Management has a clear view of where the organisation is going and how to get there."

**"I believe that management would only lay people off as a last resort."**

"I feel good about the ways in which we contribute to the community."

**"People celebrate special events around here."**

"We have unique and special benefits here."



### MEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO AGREE WITH:

"I am able to take time off from work when I think it's necessary."

**"People here are treated fairly regardless of their sex."**

"People here are paid fairly for the work they do."

**"This is a physically safe place to work."**

"I feel I make a difference here."

## MENTAL HEALTH

Stress, anxiety and depression cause more lost days than any other form of health issue. According to the Mental Health Foundation:

### 13.3 million working days are lost each year

to mental health issues. But there is a huge stigma around it. Managers are ill-equipped or lack training to deal with it so people suffer in silence which affects their productivity and often colleagues around them.

### Psychological and emotional wellbeing at work has fallen

in 2014 by just over three percentage points compared with the previous year, according to our research. This may not sound high but it is still significant.

### Another drop is in how involved employees feel in decisions

that affect them or their working environment, which is likely to make people feel stressed. This is nearly 4 percentage points lower than last year.



## MANAGERS IN TOP-RANKED ORGANISATIONS

"You walk in as a new member of staff and feel welcome and part of something special. This feeling never really goes away. Managers are approachable – everyone spends valuable time training and explaining all aspects of the roles. Time is set aside to do fun activities and bond as a group. Management consistently encourages people to better themselves in both personal and professional settings. This ensures there is always a motivating ethos."

**"Recognition is what is unique about this company, particularly in comparison to other firms in our industry. No matter how small the achievement managers make sure it is recognised across the business. Senior Managers take the time to personally congratulate individuals which does great for self-esteem across the whole company and ultimately makes it a very positive working environment."**

**"The management structure is sound and uses common sense in decision-making and the running of the business; this sounds obvious but there have been many businesses where I have been employed where this just isn't the case. My place of employment understands the logic of looking after their employees who, in turn, look after their clients, creating a cycle of efficiency and above-and-beyond satisfaction."**

**"This company provides a working environment which encourages both professional and personal achievement by supporting staff with tools to have a healthy work/life balance. Everyone is treated equally and suggestions are always appreciated and valued by management. I am proud to tell people about my workplace and the efforts it makes to support the community and charity."**

"Managers behave just like other staff. They mix at lunchtimes, laugh and socialise with us and their doors are always open. My MD is as approachable as any other colleague. I genuinely feel that staff happiness is a major factor in every decision the company makes."



## MANAGERS IN BOTTOM UNRANKED ORGANISATIONS

**"Honesty and the ability to do the job... two things that my managers do not have."**

**"There is generally poor communication between management and staff, which causes confusion and compromises trust."**

**"Honesty and transparency would go a long way to generate respect, which is sadly lacking in my manager..."**

**"I would like the management to listen more to staff ideas, concerns and general points of view as the staff are the ones that are on the ground working and liaising with the customers on a daily basis."**

**"We have been made to feel like a number rather than intelligent human beings with more to offer. A lot of staff have left recently due to poor morale and lack of support to embrace flexible ways of working."**

**"Managers still do not trust staff to act professionally. There is too much monitoring, necessitating us to jump through numerous hoops on a daily basis."**

**"I can't believe nothing has been done about [my manager]. He treats those who work for him very poorly, with disdain, distrust. He has no respect for us and shows it. I do not feel valued, I feel oppressed. The worst thing is that nothing will be done about it."**

**"Some line managers NEVER recognise their team members for excellent work."**

# THE BEST WORKPLACES PROGRAMME

**Want to be a great employer, business and brand? We can help you get there!**

We're global experts in workplace culture. Your organisation's culture is ultimately your strongest competitive advantage. We can help you focus on what creates it - your values (particularly trust), your leadership, your management and your people systems and processes.

We do that by measuring how employees experience it and by evaluating the leadership and HR practices that create it. Together, this provides a detailed and comparative analysis of your workplace and identifies the real issues you may need to address.

No other consultancy has this dual approach. It is this unique methodology which drives the Best Workplace awards, the world's most respected and credible employer awards. Highly sought after for their impact on employer branding, they tell the world 'we're a great employer, brand and business'.

The Best Workplaces Programme is the world's largest workplace study. Each year we survey over 6,000 organisations, representing some 11 million employees, which gives us unrivalled data and knowledge about HR and management trends and practices, from a UK and global perspective. Our benchmarks are best in class and are updated annually.

Whether your goal is to make your organisation the best workplace it can be, external recognition as an employer of choice - or both - we can help.

## GETTING FROM GOOD TO GREAT



**"We have always done our best to ensure that we have positive 'work-life integration' for all employees. However, from the survey, we have found that this has mainly focused on those people with young families. As a result, staff without children at home feel that they have less focus and we are ensuring we address this."**

**Matt Tabb, Managing Director, BWP Group**

**"Although we're now working with stronger KPIs to drive consistent performance and further defined targets across our account management positions, which could have made people feel less secure, our job security is at 95%."**

**Caroline Foote, Managing Director, Career Moves Group**

**"Always looking for new ways to engage people, understanding what motivates our staff and using that information. Communication is paramount to this - so we have that high on the strategy agenda!"**

**Leanne Goodwin, Managing Director, Jobwise**

**"We have committed to three areas of focus and established an engagement group, comprised of employees working in different departments and across different locations. They are gathering input/knowledge/ideas from peers so that we get all employees involved as much as possible."**

**Gavin Hayward, Head of HR, Unibet**



**"Benefits and socials will only get you so far; the main reason we are a Best Workplace is that we have a positive, talented team, working for positive and talented clients. We are lucky enough to work on some fantastic projects for some inspiring people and this gives the team an immense sense of pride in their work."**

**Mark Burgess, Managing Director, Capital Properties**

**"Although we have always been a leader in compliance and lending fairly, we have had to review our training materials to ensure conduct is continually embedded in our culture and that we maintain high service levels and outcomes for customers."**

**Nicholas Massey, Head of HR, Amigo Loans**

**"While we feel we are very approachable, there will always be some people who are more comfortable in an anonymous forum and the Best Workplaces Programme gives those team members a platform for their voices to be heard."**

**David Smyth, Director, Swansway Group**



**"We've put together 10 Golden Rules of People Management, underpinning them with an online Managers' Toolkit, management training and accreditation. We've conducted organisational reviews with continuous development to ensure that we have the right resource in the right place and high quality people with the right skills. We have also developed strong business cases to support investment in our people."**

**Fiona Roberts, HR Director, Volkswagen Group**

# BEST WORKPLACES 2015: SMALL 20-49 EMPLOYEES

**Ranking**

**1**

**DMW**



**Employees** 42

**Sector** IT Consulting

**Website** [www.dmwgroup.com](http://www.dmwgroup.com)

*"Sometimes it's good to stand back and take stock of everything you do and make sure it's right."*

**Chris Dean, Managing Director**

**Ranking**

**2**

**FISCAL Technologies Ltd**



**Employees** 29

**Sector** Software

**Website** [www.fiscaltec.co.uk](http://www.fiscaltec.co.uk)

"We have implemented programmes to recruit and retain talent in the same way that large organisations do."

**Lesley Reeve, COO**

**Ranking**

**3**

**London Vision Clinic**



**Employees** 47

**Sector** Healthcare

**Web** [www.londonvisionclinic.com](http://www.londonvisionclinic.com)

"This is the best workplace I have ever had. I've been working here for 4 years and have worked my way up in the organisation." **Employee**

**Ranking**

**4**

**Medela UK Ltd**



**Employees** 33

**Sector** Medical Sales/Distribution

**Website** [www.medela.co.uk](http://www.medela.co.uk)

"Our team really values the effort that goes into developing our culture."

**Paul Furlong, Managing Director**

**Ranking**

**5**

**Broadgate Mainland**



**Employees** 23

**Sector** Advertising & Marketing

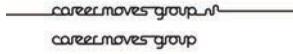
**Web** [www.broadgatemainland.com](http://www.broadgatemainland.com)

"Every opportunity to engage with the team and gather their input is invaluable, generating ideas that support our business growth." **Roland Cross, Director**

**Ranking**

**6**

**Career Moves Group**



**Employees** 22

**Sector** Recruitment

**Web** [www.careermovesgroup.co.uk](http://www.careermovesgroup.co.uk)

"Following a massive organisational transformation we used survey feedback to earnestly monitor engagement."

**Caroline Foote, Managing Director**

**Ranking**

**7**

**money.co.uk Ltd**



**Employees** 33

**Sector** Online Internet Services

**Website** [www.money.co.uk](http://www.money.co.uk)

"Doing what works for you and establishing your own common sense rules really can work."

**Chris Morling, Managing Director**

**Ranking**

**8**

**Winshuttle**



**Employees** 45

**Sector** Software

**Website** [www.winshuttle.com](http://www.winshuttle.com)

"To be able to positively benchmark ourselves against similar-sized companies was incredibly uplifting."

**Lorraine Hartill, EMEA HR Director**

**Ranking**

**9**

**Propellernet**



**Employees** 45

**Sector** Online Internet Services

**Website** [www.propellernet.co.uk](http://www.propellernet.co.uk)

"You can't be a great place to work if you don't understand what your people want and need."

**Nikki Gatenby, Managing Director**

'It enabled us to identify areas that need focus and we have improved in all of them'

## UK RANKING

Ranking  
**10**



**Employees** 26  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.jobwise.co.uk](http://www.jobwise.co.uk)

"Our staff are fully aware of the future strategy and vision of the company and how they can play their part."  
**Leanne Goodwin, Managing Director**

Ranking  
**11**



**Employees** 34  
**Sector** Financial Services & Insurance  
**Website** [www.centor.co.uk](http://www.centor.co.uk)

"This approach to business works. Our turnover, profits, client retention rate and new business have never been higher."  
**Paul Field, Claims Director**

Ranking  
**12**



**Employees** 32  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.newchapter.co.uk](http://www.newchapter.co.uk)

"By focusing on employees, we know the by-product will be a motivated, engaged workforce that delivers great results."  
**Adrian Dalby, Managing Director**

Ranking  
**13**



**Employees** 20  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.justit.co.uk](http://www.justit.co.uk)

"The survey created a buzz and made people think about what we are doing well and what we could do better."  
**Lee Dempster, Chief Operating Officer**

Ranking  
**14**



**Employees** 32  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.interimpартners.com](http://www.interimpартners.com)

"It has enabled us to identify areas that need more focus and we have greatly improved in all of them."  
**Debbie Norman, HR Director**

Ranking  
**15**



**Employees** 36  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.zenopa.com](http://www.zenopa.com)

"The more you put in, the more the company gives back. We reward people's efforts and the results they achieve."  
**Mark Denton, Managing Director**

Ranking  
**16**



**Employees** 22  
**Sector** Professional Services  
**Website** [www.wearematerial.co.uk](http://www.wearematerial.co.uk)

"Our internal excellence and learning programmes have shaped our teams and won us business as well."  
**Sera Miller, CEO and Founder**

Ranking  
**17**



**Employees** 47  
**Sector** Advertising & Marketing  
**Website** [www.bwpgroup.com](http://www.bwpgroup.com)

"The staff have not only embraced the culture they have run with it and shaped it in their own image."  
**Matt Tabb, Managing Director**

Ranking  
**18**



**Employees** 21  
**Sector** IT Consulting  
**Website** [www.orbium.com](http://www.orbium.com)

"We will continue to engage our team with a strong emphasis on career development, training and team events."  
**Sarah Badawy, Senior HR Officer**

Ranking  
**19**



**Employees** 32  
**Sector** Education & Training  
**Website** [www.nkdlearning.co.uk](http://www.nkdlearning.co.uk)

"We are always looking at ways to get better because, as a learning agency we must continue to learn."  
**Sue Stoneman, CEO and Founder**

Ranking  
**20**



**Employees** 21  
**Sector** Electronics  
**Website** [www.hitek-ltd.co.uk](http://www.hitek-ltd.co.uk)

"It is a person- rather than task-based business. People are in charge of their own destiny by empowerment."  
**Jim Lawton, Managing Director**



# Softcat



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800

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## BEST WORKPLACES (SMALL)



# TEAM SPIRIT

**The current leader of the small business category has truly stamped its mark on Best Workplaces. But what is the secret of DMW's success?**

**D**MW Group's success in being awarded number one position in the 2015 Best Workplaces - Small category list is no mean feat. But the achievement is all the greater given that it has topped the Small list for a second year running, the first time a company has been able to do this.

The people-centric focus at DMW, an IT consulting company that works with both the public and private sectors, is evident even from the way it markets itself: "Success or failure is rarely down to the complexity of technology or the reality of the business situation. It is almost always down to the people

involved." Is this philosophy the secret to its sustained success?

Managing Director Chris Dean explains the 25-year-old company's commitment to its employees is very much its strength. But, crucially, DMW's senior management invests the time to continually test and review that commitment through engagement tools, such as annual surveys and strategy days, that also harness input from staff to drive continuous improvement.

"Every year we conduct a survey to check with our staff how they feel about DMW," Dean explains.

"We believe in our people and at our annual strategy day the whole firm takes time out to discuss DMW's future. We have an open and all-inclusive conversation about our ambitions, vision, what is working well and what we want to change. We use this to drive activity throughout the following year. This process makes our clients and staff happy and is at the core of what makes DMW great."

Chris Dean: DMW's senior team invests plenty of time and energy into driving engagement



# 'They're an extremely passionate team of people who believe that delivering for clients is the ultimate expression of DMW'



Being involved with the Best Workplaces Programme has served to underline the effectiveness of the company's approach. Dean says: "We work hard to make DMW a great place to work and we're delighted to have that independently recognised. We are extremely proud of our staff, our clients and our work. Sometimes it's good to stand back and take stock of everything you do and make sure it's right; the Best Workplaces Programme has provided us with the perfect opportunity to do that."

But it's not merely about recognition. The Programme is also being employed to address a range of challenges that affect the business - both company and sector specific.

For example, Dean admits that under-representation of women in the technology arena is a persistent business critical problem.

"Our clients are diverse and we want our staff to be, too. Breadth of thinking is sometimes the only way to solve our clients' hardest problems," he says.

DMW is using blogs and posts on its website to promote the importance of diversity in the workplace and reflect on the cultural and educational changes that need to take place to attract more women into the technology field. However, Dean says

the Best Workplaces Programme is also being used to help the company think more systematically about how to address the problem.

Work-life balance is also an issue for the company. Dean explains: "Building a business is hard and sometimes there are bumps in the road. Our consultants are passionate about helping their clients; sometimes so much so they find it difficult to achieve the right work-life balance."

Again, it is the company's people-centred ethos and commitment to effective communication that is helping DMW to re-align that imbalance. "By returning to our core principles and engaging in grown-up conversations with staff and clients, there's very little that can't be sorted out," Dean says.

The Best Workplaces process hasn't been without its lessons. Ironically, the positive outcomes of it and how to deal with the success story have offered a key learning point for DMW. "Being top of the list feels amazing but that doesn't mean we should stop thinking about how we improve ourselves," says Dean.

"We can compete successfully with firms who have become household names by constantly striving to be the best at what we do

and not becoming complacent."

Second, the Programme has highlighted that it's the little things that are of paramount importance to building a successful team.

"Genuine appreciation of people's contribution, saying thank you for a job well done is in some ways more important than money."

The payback of the company's involvement in the Best Workplaces Programme and in its drive for high engagement levels has been hugely valuable, however.

Dean admits one of the biggest positive surprises along the way has been the level of staff innovation.

"When we treat our staff with respect and give them an equal voice in helping to set the direction of DMW I have been continuously surprised at the innovation that they show. They're an extremely passionate team of people who believe that delivering for our clients is the ultimate expression of DMW. Sometimes that delivery isn't always to the benefit of DMW in the short-term, but we're not a short-term company. We believe in depth of relationship over the long-term. That's most beneficial to our clients."

The Best Workplaces Award has also enabled the company to attract the best talent, helping to ensure its continued success. "It has broadened our reach to find the best people we can, to build a truly great place to work. We have something special at DMW and it's such a thrill that it is externally recognised."

The challenge now for DMW is sustaining that commitment to high workplace engagement. How does the company plan to build on what it has already achieved?

Dean concludes: "This is the second consecutive year we've won this award so we do seem to be sustaining our success. But complacency is not in our nature. Whether it's solving the next challenging problem for our clients or recruiting new staff, we are always thinking about how to improve.

"That is our nature. This award provides our team with yet more energy to build our company, helping our clients with their trickiest problems for the next 25 years."



**GREAT** no matter how you cut it

Baringa Partners LLP  
Dominican Court  
17 Hatfields  
London SE1 8DJ

T +44 (0)203 327 4220  
W [www.baringa.com](http://www.baringa.com)

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**loved by our people &  
first choice for customers**  
our vision says it all about REL!



## The pursuit of our vision is what keeps us awake at night

Our aim of becoming the most trusted organisation in the UK is a pretty tough gig. Then again, people are our passion and what's the point of dreaming small?

Whilst you may not know REL Field Marketing (and no, we're not farmers!) you will recognise the iconic brands of our partners for whom our field sales and marketing teams deliver award winning representation every day.

**Thanks to all our people for making REL a 'great place to work'!**



# BEST WORKPLACES 2015: MEDIUM 50-499 EMPLOYEES

## Ranking

**1**

**Goodman Masson**



**Employees** 130  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.goodmanmasson.com](http://www.goodmanmasson.com)

*"The retention and engagement of our people is the company's primary strategic objective, above all others."*

**Guy Hayward, CEO**

## Ranking

**2**

**One Vision Housing**



**Employees** 238  
**Sector** Housing  
**Website** [www.ovh.org.uk](http://www.ovh.org.uk)

"The sustainability of our organisation is dependent upon our employees' drive and determination." **Roy Williams, Chief Executive**

## Ranking

**3**

**Liquid Personnel Ltd**



**Employees** 71  
**Sector** Recruitment  
**Website** [www.liquidpersonnel.com](http://www.liquidpersonnel.com)

"It's important that no matter how much we grow, we bring our whole team together often." **Jonathan Coxon, Managing Director**

## Ranking

**4**

**Belron International Ltd**



**Employees** 193  
**Sector** Vehicle Repair/Maintenance  
**Website** [www.belron.com](http://www.belron.com)

"Our culture has a minimum of bureaucracy, policy, rules and regulations and is based on trust." **Jo Steel, Head of People and Leadership**

## Ranking

**5**

**Capital Properties UK Ltd**



**Employees** 62  
**Sector** Property  
**Web** [www.capitalpropertiesltd.com](http://www.capitalpropertiesltd.com)

"We have no intention of resting on our laurels; we are aiming for Laureate status!" **Mark Burgess, Managing Director**

## Ranking

**6**

**Impact International**



**Employees** 84  
**Sector** Management Consulting  
**Web** [www.impactinternational.com](http://www.impactinternational.com)

"The company's survival and growth are testament to its values and ethics."  
**Employee**

## Ranking

**7**

**R.Twinings & Company Ltd**



**Employees** 110  
**Sector** Food products  
**Website** [www.twinings.co.uk](http://www.twinings.co.uk)

"Engagement is not a one-off exercise, it will take continued focus and effort to keep it alive." **Liam McNamara, Sales Director**

## Ranking

**8**

**Autodesk**



**Employees** 297  
**Sector** Software  
**Website** [www.autodesk.co.uk](http://www.autodesk.co.uk)

"When you need your manager they are there for you and not overbearing."  
**Employee**

## Ranking

**9**

**Fleet Alliance Ltd**



**Employees** 52  
**Sector** Insurance  
**Website** [www.fleetalliance.co.uk](http://www.fleetalliance.co.uk)

"It is important to be transparent about where we lack as a business and where we excel." **Martin Brown, Managing Director**

## Ranking

**10**

**Baringa Partners**



**Employees** 336  
**Sector** Management Consulting  
**Website** [www.baringa.com](http://www.baringa.com)

"You genuinely feel like you have an active support network behind you regardless of which business unit you are from." **Employee**

## Ranking

**11**

**National Instruments Corporation (UK) Ltd**



**Employees** 103  
**Sector** Electronics  
**Website** <http://uk.ni.com>

"Extra effort is always recognised by management and rewarded."  
**Employee**

## Ranking

**12**

**Danone Nutricia Early Life Nutrition**



**Employees** 176  
**Sector** FMCG  
**Website** [www.danone.co.uk](http://www.danone.co.uk)

"Be true to yourselves and what you do well. It should be how you do business – not just an initiative." **Liz Ellis, HR Director**

## Ranking

**13**

**Intuit**



**Employees** 105  
**Sector** Software  
**Website** [www.intuit.co.uk](http://www.intuit.co.uk)

"We continue to look for opportunities as we strive to be the best in developing a diverse workforce." **Rich Preece, UK Country Manager**

## Ranking

**14**

**Peer1 Hosting UK Ltd**



**Employees** 124  
**Sector** Internet Service Provider  
**Website** [www.peer1hosting.co.uk](http://www.peer1hosting.co.uk)

"Culture is driven by passionate people, it's not the responsibility of any one leader." **Helen Ives, Vice President, People and Performance**

## Ranking

**15**

**Lansons**



**Employees** 102  
**Sector** Advertising & Marketing  
**Website** [www.lansons.com](http://www.lansons.com)

"You have to be ambitious for your people as well as your company."  
**Helen Proud, Director**

<b>Ranking 16</b>	<b>Computer People</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 97 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.computerpeople.co.uk">www.computerpeople.co.uk</a>	"Support is there when required but you're treated as a professional and as an adult." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 17</b>	<b>Kindred Agency Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 63 <b>Sector</b> Advertising & Marketing <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.kindredagency.com">www.kindredagency.com</a>	"Knowing what motivates our staff is as vital as getting under the skin of any client campaign audience." <b>Nick Mustoe, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Ranking 18</b>	<b>NetApp UK Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 355 <b>Sector</b> Storage/Data Management <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.netapp.co.uk">www.netapp.co.uk</a>	"I am motivated and inspired to produce great results." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 19</b>	<b>Lead Forensics</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 165 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.leadforensics.com">www.leadforensics.com</a>	"Our culture celebrates the successes and achievements of all our employees." <b>Lisa Turner, Chief Marketing Officer</b>
<b>Ranking 20</b>	<b>Baird</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 82 <b>Sector</b> Financial Services <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.bairdeurope.com">www.bairdeurope.com</a>	"Even the most junior members of staff are valued and appreciated by the most senior." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 21</b>	<b>MarketMakers</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 206 <b>Sector</b> Call centres <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.marketmakers.co.uk">www.marketmakers.co.uk</a>	"Focus on getting a motivated and loyal team in place and everything else will come into line." <b>Henry Braithwaite, Operations Director</b>
<b>Ranking 22</b>	<b>Spring Technology</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 88 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Web</b> <a href="http://www.spring-technology.co.uk">www.spring-technology.co.uk</a>	"Directors get involved in and listen to what we do and managers are approachable." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 23</b>	<b>Virgo Health</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 70 <b>Sector</b> Advertising & Marketing <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.virgohealth.com">www.virgohealth.com</a>	"A number of our team have progressed from graduates to excelling in board-level positions." <b>Angie Wiles, Sarah Matthew, Joint CEOs</b>
<b>Ranking 24</b>	<b>Cognolink</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 115 <b>Sector</b> Management Consulting <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.cognolink.com">www.cognolink.com</a>	"Our team is looking for more opportunities to give back to the community, so we have to keep building on that." <b>Emmanuel Tahar, CEO</b>
<b>Ranking 25</b>	<b>Madgex</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 65 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.madgex.com">www.madgex.com</a>	"Growth can present challenges and we've had to rise to each one along the way. Our staff have been brilliant!" <b>Hanna Smith, HR Director</b>
<b>Ranking 26</b>	<b>Cadence Design Systems Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 180 <b>Sector</b> IT <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.cadence.com">www.cadence.com</a>	"We've seen a positive employee reaction this year and look forward to carrying on the momentum." <b>Tom de Vries, EMEA HR Director</b>
<b>Ranking 27</b>	<b>OPEN Health</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 178 <b>Sector</b> Advertising & Marketing <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.openhealth.co.uk">www.openhealth.co.uk</a>	"As we grow it is important for everyone to feel included in the developments of the business." <b>Lucy Malin, Talent Manager</b>
<b>Ranking 28</b>	<b>Sellick Partnership Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 55 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Web</b> <a href="http://www.sellickpartnership.co.uk">www.sellickpartnership.co.uk</a>	"The whole process has added value and the depth of the information received has been excellent." <b>Jo Sellick, Managing Director</b>
<b>Ranking 29</b>	<b>Amigo Loans</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 248 <b>Sector</b> Financial Services/Insurance <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.amigoloans.co.uk">www.amigoloans.co.uk</a>	"This gives us independent measurement of internal engagement levels and comparison with businesses." <b>Nicholas Massey, Head of HR</b>
<b>Ranking 30</b>	<b>Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 71 <b>Sector</b> Education & Training <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.rcvs.org.uk">www.rcvs.org.uk</a>	"We are now starting to see results from our high levels of staff engagement." <b>Nick Stace, CEO</b>
<b>Ranking 31</b>	<b>Biogen Idec Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 221 <b>Sector</b> Biotechnology <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.biogenidec.co.uk">www.biogenidec.co.uk</a>	"They embrace feedback and continuously strive to be better." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 32</b>	<b>W L Gore &amp; Associates (UK) Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 385 <b>Sector</b> Manufacturing & Production <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.gore.com">www.gore.com</a>	"We are trusted to get on with our work and come up with new ideas and ways of doing things." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 33</b>	<b>Office Angels Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 337 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.office-angels.com">www.office-angels.com</a>	"The attitude is friendly, approachable and down-to-earth, yet still communicates credibility and a sense of fun." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 34</b>	<b>FactSet</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 339 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.factset.com">www.factset.com</a>	"This is the friendliest place I have worked in and proves that diversity in the workplace works." <b>Employee</b>

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
LUXEMBOURG CITY  
(Neumünster Abbey)

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CONFERENCE  
2015  
EUROPE

## 2015 Great Place to Work® Europe Conference

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*Professor of Finance*  
LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL



Garry Mc CABE  
*HR Director Ireland*  
KUEHNE + NAGEL



Caroliën BIJEN  
*Senior consultant*  
&SAMHOUD



Jon PERSSON  
*CEO and chairman*  
CYGNI



Mark De SMEDT  
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<b>Ranking</b> <b>35</b>	<b>General Mills UK Ltd</b>  GENERAL MILLS	<b>Employees</b> 159 <b>Sector</b> FMCG <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.generalmills.co.uk">www.generalmills.co.uk</a>	"Our culture is a platform to improve our agility and resilience through times of change." <b>Sue Swanborough, HR Director</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>36</b>	<b>The Coca-Cola Company</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 237 <b>Sector</b> Beverages <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.coca-cola.co.uk">www.coca-cola.co.uk</a>	"We feel cared for by the company – it is a great place to work." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>37</b>	<b>Liberty IT</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 389 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.liberty-it.co.uk">www.liberty-it.co.uk</a>	"There is great camaraderie in the organisation. We appreciate the social club and social events that take place." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>38</b>	<b>Esendex</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 61 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.esendex.com">www.esendex.com</a>	"Many of the key skills in our business are desired by others; we need to attract the right people and retain them." <b>Geoff Love, CEO</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>39</b>	<b>Sabio Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 189 <b>Sector</b> Telecommunications <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.sabio.co.uk">www.sabio.co.uk</a>	"Managers are interested in engagement and want to put plans into action." <b>Suzie Foster, People Development Manager</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>40</b>	<b>FinancialForce.com</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 165 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.financialforce.com">www.financialforce.com</a>	"We will continue to monitor and adapt as we scale upwards, but the culture is inherent." <b>Matt Cosway, Director, Employee Success</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>41</b>	<b>Ketchum Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 227 <b>Sector</b> Professional Services <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.ketchum.com">www.ketchum.com</a>	"We care about being an ethical organisation and I'm pleased we take part in so many charitable efforts." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>42</b>	<b>Totaljobs Group</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 433 <b>Sector</b> Online Internet Services <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.totaljobsgroup.com">www.totaljobsgroup.com</a>	"This has increased the credibility of our employer brand when hiring the best candidates." <b>Andrea Peart, Head of HR</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>43</b>	<b>Banks Sadler</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 122 <b>Sector</b> Hospitality Management <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.banks-sadler.com">www.banks-sadler.com</a>	"We plan to use Best Workplaces as a regular exercise to benchmark our ongoing performance." <b>Leigh Jagger, CEO</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>44</b>	<b>ResMed (UK) Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 77 <b>Sector</b> Medical Sales/Distribution <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.resmed.co.uk">www.resmed.co.uk</a>	"Our project team provides a constant focus for the Programme's objectives." <b>Ewan Cuthbertson, Managing Director UK &amp; Ireland</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>45</b>	<b>AbbVie</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 487 <b>Sector</b> Biotech & Pharmaceuticals <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.abbvie.co.uk">www.abbvie.co.uk</a>	"Senior management treat you like you matter and have a voice." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>46</b>	<b>Unibet (London) Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 238 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.unibet.co.uk">www.unibet.co.uk</a>	"Our participation has breathed fresh life into employee engagement and raised awareness of its value." <b>Gavin Hayward, Head of HR</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>47</b>	<b>Spring Personnel Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 86 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.springpersonnel.com">www.springpersonnel.com</a>	"The team is friendly and helpful and the managing director drives the company forward." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>48</b>	<b>Lindt &amp; Sprüngli UK Ltd</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 188 <b>Sector</b> Food Products <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.lindt.com">www.lindt.com</a>	"I would have no hesitation in recommending working at Lindt to any of my friends or family." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>49</b>	<b>TD Securities</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 231 <b>Sector</b> Banking/Credit Services <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.tdsecurities.com">www.tdsecurities.com</a>	"There is a sense of team spirit, and an inclusive culture, which is positive and supportive." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking</b> <b>50</b>	<b>Xaxis</b> 	<b>Employees</b> 81 <b>Sector</b> Digital Media Advertising <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.xaxis.com">www.xaxis.com</a>	"The biggest positive has been our corporate culture thriving during tremendous growth." <b>Sara Hafele, Senior VP, Global HR</b>

# MEDIUM AND LARGE WINNERS

**Our best medium and large workplaces this year are from under-pressure and under-fire sectors: recruitment and financial services. We discover how they overcame the odds to use their employer brand to tackle these challenges**

**F**inancial recruitment company Goodman Masson set itself a challenging strategic goal – to treat its people better than any other business in the UK.

Being awarded first place in the Best Workplaces – Medium Category is certainly recognition that it's making good progress in realising that lofty ambition.

The recruitment industry, and in particular companies serving the financial sector, suffered major turmoil during the global recession when hiring trends took a dive and competition intensified. As a high-pressure sector, it also faces the challenge of having to overcome a reputation compromised by less scrupulous agencies and high staff attrition levels.

But Goodman Masson's firm and unwavering focus on fostering high engagement levels among employees has helped it to create a distinct employer brand and placed the business on its own path to success. The company, based in London and Düsseldorf, holds annual revenues exceeding £35 million and has scooped numerous industry awards for its approach to customer service to clients

and candidates and its investment in, and commitment to, its own staff.

The company created a unique approach to employee engagement for its 130 employees called The Experience® (it became a registered trademark last year), which has played a defining role in the company's culture. Introduced in 2009, it addresses four main areas: ensuring employees have the tools and infrastructure to be successful; opportunity for progress and professional development; being well and correctly rewarded; and creating an environment employees won't want to leave.

Some examples of what the company offers include annual subsidised ski trips, lunch at leading London restaurants for the quarterly top performers, a dedicated chill out room with TV and games consoles, financial help with building a deposit for first time buyers, a new parent loan, working from home, coaching and mentoring, complete transparency around P&L, all staff being involved in the budget process and much more.

CEO Guy Hayward says the tool was, in part, devised to deal with the critical problem of high staff turnover.



Capital One has taken rigorous steps to create a fun workplace that is values-based and committed to customer care.

"Expectations of high service levels and deep understanding of our markets is playing an ever-increasing role in how businesses and candidates choose which recruitment company they will work with."

"High staff turnover associated with our industry makes meeting these expectations and building this understanding a difficult challenge." Staff turnover at Goodman Masson has remained less than 18 per cent over the past three years and last year was down to 16.7 per cent [the average in the recruitment sector is between 25 and 35 per cent, it is estimated]. We're hugely proud of our attrition levels," Hayward says.

To ensure it continues to make a difference long term, The Experience®



forms the basis of the company's business plan with all employees (no matter how senior) owning objectives closely linked to its framework.

## BEST WORKPLACES



Hayward says the company's achievement with Best Workplaces has been down to the senior team's "unwavering and at times slightly unfashionable belief that the retention and engagement of our people is the company's primary strategic objective, above all others.

"We believe our people see this and they know that we care... it's the reason they have made this achievement possible."

Taking part in the Best Workplaces Programme has benefited Goodman Masson by placing it in a wider community and network of companies that consider creating best workplace environments an important part of their business strategy, Hayward adds.

### Capital One

The financial services sector took a severe battering during the global downturn affecting not just business performance and profitability but also reputation and brand.

The negative image that still pervades large parts of the industry has naturally had damaging consequences for employee morale and recruitment and retention of staff across financial



services businesses.

It is a challenging environment that credit card company Capital One has taken rigorous steps to beat - by creating a unique place to

work that is fun, values-based and every bit committed to customer care. It's no surprise then it has scooped the award for Best Workplaces - Large Category - for the third consecutive year.

The breakdown in trust suffered in the industry led Capital One to seek to build confidence with consumers, as well as overturn the perception of what it might mean to have a career in a financial services business.

Its mission, titled 'Change Banking for Good' is, "as much about the lives and careers of our employees as it is our customers and the industry as a whole," explains Karen Bowes, VP International HR and Sustainability.

"Capital One is a place where employees feel empowered to make a difference, whether that's taking

immediate action on a customer call, or looking more widely at processes. For a company of over 1,000 people, we still manage to feel like a family, with many of our employees choosing to socialise together outside of work."

That has partly been achieved by maintaining and fostering excellent levels of communication which is one of the biggest HR challenges for any large organisation, says Bowes.

The company uses both formal and informal, ad hoc channels to strengthen communication and build engagement. "All our employees attend the quarterly business update, enabling them to hear directly from the CEO and we have both our internal surveys and the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® all giving us valuable insight. Our internal intranet system, Pulse, has a number of great blogs, both by the leadership team and employees across the business. Teams all meet regularly to share information and gather feedback."

Communication also forms one of a set of values that underpin the company's vision, 'Let's Make Lives Better', which is designed to transform and develop a culture built around responsible lending, customer care and support. That, together with its employee proposition and focus on providing support in the local community, has helped build a powerful and customer-centric employer brand.

"Everyone aspires to achieve more, better, faster and more efficiently – all with the aim of doing the best for our customers," says Bowes.

She adds that being involved with the Best Workplaces Programme has given added impetus to the culture and brand created: "When we recruit new staff we can tell them about the camaraderie, our fun events, our development offers. But to be able to show that everything we are telling them has been endorsed by an external organisation is really powerful."

However, the process has highlighted how building a unique workplace is not just about the big promises and commitments between senior leaders and the workforce.

"It's about the promises and commitments made between colleagues and across teams every single day. We all contribute," adds Bowes.

# BEST WORKPLACES 2015: LARGE 500+ EMPLOYEES

**Ranking  
1**

**Capital One (Europe) Plc**



**Employees** 1,288  
**Sector** Credit Cards  
**Website** [www.capitalone.co.uk](http://www.capitalone.co.uk)

*"They may say: 'don't sweat the small stuff', but the smallest things can make a world of difference."*

**Karen Bowes, VP International HR and Sustainability**

**Ranking  
2**

**Softcat Ltd.**



**Employees** 710  
**Sector** IT  
**Website** [www.softcat.com](http://www.softcat.com)

"Everyone wants a job where they can have fun at work - we've made this a reality."

**Shelley Ferrigno, Head of HR and Recruitment**

**Ranking  
3**

**Salesforce**



**Employees** 649  
**Sector** Software  
**Website** [www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com)

"Culture is the secret weapon when it comes to winning the war for talent." **Andrew Lawson, SVP Enterprise Business UK&I**

**Ranking  
4**

**Admiral Group plc**



**Employees** 5,054  
**Sector** Life Insurance  
**Website** [www.admiralgroup.co.uk](http://www.admiralgroup.co.uk)

"Call centres can be high pressure, so we try to ensure being here is enjoyable."  
**Ceri Assiratti, Head of People Services**

**Ranking  
5**

**REL Field Marketing**



**Employees** 616  
**Sector** Advertising & Marketing  
**Website** [www.relfm.com](http://www.relfm.com)

"We give management the confidence to unleash performance, creativity - winning for our partners." **Stephen Gordon, Divisional MD**

**Ranking  
6**

**Rackspace**



**Employees** 1,025  
**Sector** Storage/Data Management  
**Website** [www.rackspace.co.uk](http://www.rackspace.co.uk)

"Our culture contributes to engagement. Teams work collaboratively to ensure it stays alive and well." **Tiffany Lathe, VP and General Counsel**

**Ranking  
7**

**Bright Horizons Family Solutions**



**Employees** 4,575  
**Sector** Education & Training  
**Website** [www.brighthorizons.co.uk](http://www.brighthorizons.co.uk)

"There is a sense that everyone is united in our common endeavour to provide the highest level of service and support." **Employee**

**Ranking  
8**

**Hilton Worldwide**



**Employees** 9,583  
**Sector** Hotels  
**Website** [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com)

"There is a 'family feel' within Hilton. Staff help each other, are friendly and work as a team." **Employee**

**Ranking  
9**

**Microsoft**



**Employees** 3,000  
**Sector** IT  
**Website** [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

"We need to continue to focus on creating a diverse experience rather than a one size fits all approach." **Theresa McHenry, HR Director**

**Ranking  
10**

**Hyatt Hotels - UK**



**Employees** 800  
**Sector** Hotels  
**Website** [www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)

"We need to sell our sector as having careers, full of opportunities to learn, develop and advance." **Dawn Turner, Area Director HR**

**Ranking  
11**

**McDonald's Restaurants**



**Employees** 37,689  
**Sector** Food & Beverage Service  
**Website** [www.mcdonalds.co.uk](http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk)

"Employees enjoy having flexible working opportunities that allow them to fit in personal commitments." **Employee**

**Ranking  
12**

**Volkswagen Group UK Ltd**



**Employees** 918  
**Sector** Retail  
**Website** [www.volkswagen.co.uk](http://www.volkswagen.co.uk)

"Create a culture of ownership and give permission; many issues can be resolved by the teams." **Fiona Roberts, HR Director**

**Ranking  
13**

**Cisco UK**



**Employees** 3,221  
**Sector** IT  
**Website** [www.cisco.co.uk](http://www.cisco.co.uk)

"We'll work through our engagement strategy to further develop our culture." **Caroline Griffiths, Head of HR UK & Ireland**

'Listen to what the feedback tells you, make a plan; then act on it'

## UK RANKING

<b>Ranking 14</b>	Adecco UK Ltd  better work, better life	<b>Employees</b> 514 <b>Sector</b> Recruitment <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.adecco.co.uk">www.adecco.co.uk</a>	"We now have one clear vision rather than lots of messages about where we are going." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 15</b>	Pets At Home 	<b>Employees</b> 6,827 <b>Sector</b> Retail <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.petsathome.com">www.petsathome.com</a>	"People trust feedback will be confidential and action taken to make us a better place to work." <b>Ryan Cheyne, People Director</b>
<b>Ranking 16</b>	Wyndham Worldwide - UK 	<b>Employees</b> 1,191 <b>Sector</b> Hospitality <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.wyndhamworldwide.com">www.wyndhamworldwide.com</a>	"We've worked hard to create an environment that promotes organisational trust." <b>Helen Khan, VP of HR (UK)</b>
<b>Ranking 17</b>	Accor Hotels 	<b>Employees</b> 4,606 <b>Sector</b> Hotels <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.accor.com">www.accor.com</a>	"Accor is great for allowing individuals to develop and to move around the company." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 18</b>	Flight Centre (UK) Ltd 	<b>Employees</b> 1,832 <b>Sector</b> Travel Management <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.flightcentre.co.uk">www.flightcentre.co.uk</a>	"Many opportunities regarding progression and development are available locally and globally." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 19</b>	EMC Computer Systems (UK Ltd) 	<b>Employees</b> 1,593 <b>Sector</b> IT <b>Website</b> <a href="http://uk.emc.com">http://uk.emc.com</a>	"There is a sense of purpose in what we do, striving to be the best in the industry." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 20</b>	KFC UK&I 	<b>Employees</b> 10,624 <b>Sector</b> Food & Beverage Service <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.kfc.co.uk">www.kfc.co.uk</a>	"Development is focused on the entire person rather than simply professional development." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 21</b>	Swansway Garages 	<b>Employees</b> 682 <b>Sector</b> Retail <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.swanswaygarages.com">www.swanswaygarages.com</a>	"Listen to what the feedback tells you, make a plan; then act on it, don't just talk about it!" <b>David Smyth, Director</b>
<b>Ranking 22</b>	dunnhumby 	<b>Employees</b> 856 <b>Sector</b> Storage/Data Management <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.dunnhumby.com">www.dunnhumby.com</a>	"Managers now celebrate success and identify where to take action." <b>Mike Healy, Employee Engagement Manager</b>
<b>Ranking 23</b>	Discovery Networks 	<b>Employees</b> 809 <b>Sector</b> TV/Film/Video <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.discoveryuk.com">www.discoveryuk.com</a>	"Putting employees' wellbeing first: making it a priority makes a difference." <b>Trisha North, VP HR Corporate Groups</b>
<b>Ranking 24</b>	Great Places Housing Group 	<b>Employees</b> 646 <b>Sector</b> Charity <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.greatplaces.org.uk">www.greatplaces.org.uk</a>	"We never stop listening to our most valued asset - our people." <b>Matthew Harrison, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Ranking 25</b>	Wragge Lawrence Graham & Co LLP 	<b>Employees</b> 1,118 <b>Sector</b> Legal <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.wragge-law.com">www.wragge-law.com</a>	"A great workplace doesn't just happen - it has to be worked at and maintained." <b>Chris Oglethorpe, HR Director</b>
<b>Ranking 26</b>	Marshall Motor Holdings 	<b>Employees</b> 1,955 <b>Sector</b> Retail <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.marshallweb.co.uk">www.marshallweb.co.uk</a>	"We are totally committed to internal customer satisfaction and continuous improvement." <b>Daksh Gupta, CEO</b>
<b>Ranking 27</b>	L&Q 	<b>Employees</b> 1,238 <b>Sector</b> Property <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.lqgroup.org.uk">www.lqgroup.org.uk</a>	"We feel part of one big family at work, and managers respect us and listen to our ideas." <b>Employee</b>
<b>Ranking 28</b>	Link Group Ltd 	<b>Employees</b> 515 <b>Sector</b> Charity <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.linkhousing.org.uk">www.linkhousing.org.uk</a>	"We've taken time out to ask pertinent questions about how people feel about work." <b>Helen Bayne, Director of HR</b>
<b>Ranking 29</b>	Quintiles Ltd 	<b>Employees</b> 2,517 <b>Sector</b> Healthcare <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.quintiles.com">www.quintiles.com</a>	"This provides us with valuable data and insight which we share with our employees." <b>Neil Ralphson, Site Head</b>
<b>Ranking 30</b>	SAP UK LTD 	<b>Employees</b> 1,390 <b>Sector</b> Software <b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.sap.com">www.sap.com</a>	"SAP has managed to stay consistent in its attitude and spirit to achieve a common work ethic." <b>Employee</b>

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**Every year the Best Workplaces Programme welcomes new entrants. This year three very different organisations, facing very different challenges, are among them. We find out what they think about the experience...**

# Q&A: NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

## THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

Founded by Royal Charter in 1844, the RCVS is the statutory regulator of veterinary surgeons in the UK. Like many similar institutions, it has a complicated structure bound by statute. Comprising a governing Council of 42 members (much like a non-executive board), which is supported by a system of four statutory and three standing committees – a Privy Council, Presidential Team and Operations Board – the RCVS faces a very particular set of management challenges. CEO **Nick Stace** explains why the organisation has taken part in the Best Workplaces Programme.

### What was behind your decision to take part in the Programme?

"We set out to be one of the best places to work as a form of enlightened self-interest, knowing that highly motivated and energised people, focused on doing their best, will improve the quality of services to the public and the veterinary profession.

Initially, our challenge was convincing staff and our governing Council that we were serious about staff engagement. We needed to be clear that this was neither a flash in the pan nor was it going to be easy and it was also motivated by enlightened self-interest.

Unleashing the voice of our staff was the second big challenge. For a culture that had been used to quietly getting on with no one raising their heads, we had to work very hard to give people the space to engage. Seeing quick results within a longer-term plan was critical.

We also took high-profile action on poor behaviours exhibited by a few staff and Council members that had previously gone largely unchallenged. The results of our first staff survey undertaken a month after I was appointed showed that 17 per cent



Team away days have contributed to the "buzz" at the RCVS

of staff had felt bullied by members of our Council. We took immediate action by outlining the expected new behaviours and attitudes to staff and instituting a 'new deal' with our Council with mutual respect and a 'one-team' concept at its heart. A burning platform is often critical for rapid action and a speedy turnaround!

### **What about wider challenges in your sector – how have you dealt with them?**

Some parts of the regulatory/royal college sector face real challenges recruiting first-rate talent, because they pay averagely and rely upon somewhat slow committee-style decision-making, which can stifle effective leadership and ambition. There is also a high degree of job specialisation, with almost as many roles as there are members of staff. At the RCVS, recruiting and retaining first-rate talent by focusing on becoming a great place to work has allowed us to tackle each of these issues head on.

On remuneration, rewards and recognition we have overhauled our approach and we now pay the London Living Wage to all our suppliers, cleaners and other contractors; we also pay every member of staff the market rate or market-leading rates for pay. We are focused on everyone's development by becoming a 'learning organisation' that provides excellent training opportunities and by working with each member of staff on their career development.

Our governance has evolved and is undergoing further change to ensure we have appropriate challenge and oversight. Also, that we are more efficient and effective in how we make decisions. Being clear about our purpose, direction and style of leadership has been essential.

### **Why do you think you have made the ranking?**

We listened, we acted and we continue to deliver on the promise to make staff engagement our number one priority. There was a lot of good work being done before I joined the College but we had to be honest about our shortcomings and, once these were identified, we became determined



**RCVS Chief Executive Nick Stace:** "It's important to have a plan, but don't let it block great ideas"

to resolve these problems both at an organisational and individual level.

We tore up the rule book and asked our staff to write it afresh, making sure that their motivations and their ideas were heard and acted upon. It was staff, aided by managers, who led the turnaround and my job as CEO was to unleash the talent and remove the barriers preventing positive change.

We are now starting to see results from our high levels of staff engagement. For example, staff feel they can come up with, and implement, ideas without fear of failure and we have also seen an increase in the amount of spontaneous positive feedback about our services.

Our drive to become a first-rate regulator has also led us to become an exemplar of professional regulation and to take a leadership role within the profession. All of this contributes to the pride people feel in themselves and in the place they work.

The Programme is clearly working for us. It provides extremely transparent benchmarking, which you can't hide from and, as a CEO, it stimulates some soul searching about how serious you really are about staff engagement.

### **Have there been any surprises?**

What surprised me most is the speed in which the transformation took place, demonstrating that if you are determined to achieve change you can do so in a relatively short period of time.

We were also pleased to demonstrate, even to the most sceptical, the benefits of high levels of staff engagement and the importance of this in any high-performing organisation.

If you make staff engagement the number one organisational priority you can achieve great change. One way to do this is to listen and communicate until your ears are bleeding and your voice is broken – you can never do enough of either.

It's also important to have a plan but don't let that plan be a block to great ideas – do lots because you never know what will make the most difference to people. After all, we are all individuals and different things work for different people.

### **Overall, what difference has the Programme made?**

By taking part we made a very public commitment to do our utmost to create a happier, more motivated team and a better working environment. I believe, beyond doubt, it is absolutely at the heart of why we are now much better at serving the public and the veterinary profession than we were before.

There is a buzz around the place and people are receptive to new ideas and new ways of doing things. This has allowed us to set out an ambitious programme of change and reform so that we can become a truly first-rate regulator. The staff have been on the journey with us in developing these ambitious plans and are all motivated to make a difference.

### **How will you keep up the good work?**

On the one hand, we worry about next year because we have achieved so much this year and it's hard to sustain. On the other, we now know what we can achieve and this will provide us with greater confidence to go even further next year. Our focus for maintaining sustainability is on the areas we still need to improve, including our approach to corporate social responsibility and enabling even greater autonomy so our staff can get on with their work. Staff engagement will remain our main priority, it is a journey not a destination and the danger is in thinking you have arrived.



CEO Daksh Gupta: "It will always be on our agenda to be better."

## MARSHALL MOTOR HOLDINGS

The motor dealer group is among the top 10 in the UK, operating 71 franchise dealerships and representing 24 manufacturing brands. It turns over in excess of £1 billion per year and is the only motor retailer in the UK with all top-five premium and top-10 volume brands, accounting for more than 88% of the brands sold in the UK.

The automotive sector faces a number of challenges though, in particular skills shortages and retention. School leavers have a distinct lack of awareness about the sector and the fact it can provide incredible career opportunities in a fast-moving and challenging environment. These issues in turn make recruitment very challenging with a lack of new people coming in to the industry and the talent pool drying up. CEO **Daksh Gupta** explains how engagement and leadership can help the company recruit new talent.

### What have you hoped to achieve by taking part in the Programme?

Our strategy to become the employment destination of choice in our sector aligns perfectly with the Best Workplaces Programme and helps to set us apart from our competitors. Naturally the PR opportunity was part of our motivation and helps with our

employment brand to prospective new colleagues. However, for our existing colleagues who have worked so hard to create such a good culture in their businesses it is great recognition for them and something we can all be very proud of.

### How have you sought to recruit the right people?

It is critical our employment brand attracts the best people. We are addressing this internally through smart recruitment advertising to attract applicants from other industries and a robust selection process which promotes our employment brand and demonstrates we are responsible recruiters. Our Marshall Learning Academy provides first-class training especially for those joining us from other industries.

### What are the three most important things you've learned?

It's often the smallest things that make the biggest difference – some of the changes and new initiatives we have put in place as a result of this Programme have been really simple and inexpensive but had a huge impact. Also, internal customer feedback is invaluable – our industry spends a huge amount of time analysing external customer feedback. We recognise the value in getting

feedback from our people who actually deliver that customer service. We also get buy-in from the top – everyone in the senior team is genuinely committed to colleague engagement and continuous improvement – these underpin our values.

### How will you sustain the high levels of engagement you've measured?

For us this has never been just about gaining external recognition. While it's important and helps to support our strategy to be the employment destination of choice, colleague engagement and the continuous improvement of it is woven in to the fabric of our business.

The Programme has enabled us to measure what we have always set out to achieve and make it tangible for everyone to understand. It's very easy to think that we're doing a great job and that our colleagues are really engaged, but without an external measurement against an external benchmark it's impossible to put how we are doing into perspective.

The Best Workplace Programme provides great structure and a platform to communicate progress but it's the continuous hard work throughout the year to build on what we have already achieved that will ensure we are successful in sustaining it. We will always aim to be better and it will always be on our agenda.





Managing Director Paul Furlong: "Our team really values the effort that goes into culture."

### MEDELA

Medela started life 50 years ago as a family-owned firm in Switzerland. Now it is a leading global manufacturer and distributor of medical technology, with a name likely to be very familiar to new parents. A manufacturer of breast pumps originally, the company has also diversified into vacuum technology more generally for the medical community, and a wide range of maternity products.

Its UK outlet employs 33 people and – operating in the medical sector – faces a range of challenges from regulation to recruitment. Managing director of Medela UK Ltd, **Paul Furlong**, explains what the company has experienced in its first year of completing the Programme.

#### What challenges does the organisation face?

The healthcare sector is a highly regulated market – compliance and staff training are vital. But it's also essential that staff are motivated, supported, well-distributed and competent. If our company management is ineffective it can have an adverse impact on our customers and creates huge challenges for the business.

Recruitment of sales representatives has certainly been our biggest

issue recently. The labour market has been tight and this has been a challenge for us, especially as we are a relatively small organisation and not a household name. We have addressed these issues by efficiently marketing our employer brand with recruitment agencies. We also have a very stable workforce which has an impact on staff career progression – we endeavour to offer career development through increased responsibility within current roles.

#### How do you engage your workforce?

We aim to develop our staff and encourage high performance. Training and development is important to us along with motivation and fair remuneration. We believe our staff are valued, empowered and are a huge asset to our business. Not only do we believe this, we constantly demonstrate it. In addition, we value work-life balance, no one will ever need to miss a school play or key family event, for example. We are a team and we support each other. Medela is a business with good corporate values and it stands by them every day.

#### How would you describe your experience of taking part in the Best Workplaces Programme?

We were delighted that our staff at all

levels have been totally engaged with and excited by this process. The staff were extremely open to sharing beyond the business about what a special place it is to work and about the many benefits we offer, both above and beyond their salary.

It is also very pleasing that staff really value the opportunities we try to create and all the effort that goes into it. We've learned a number of things through the Programme: our team really values the effort that goes into developing our culture, the teamwork on this project has been vital for input to the Culture Audit® and we cannot be complacent. The market for good talent is competitive and once we have recruited the right people and trained and developed them we need to value and retain them.

#### What difference has it made to your organisation?

The first impact the Programme had was that it was a very public demonstration of our commitment to staff welfare; it gave staff another chance to be heard in a more formal way than before, which has been appreciated. Now we have completed the exercise it will support our employer brand; it has helped us to identify areas that we excel in and areas that we can improve on.



Success in the Programme will support Medela's brand

# STAYING GREAT



**Every year our Hall of Fame gets larger as more organisations join the ranks of 'Laureates' and 'Masters', achieving a place in the Best Workplaces Ranking for five or 10 consecutive years, respectively. But how do they sustain such high levels of employee engagement?**

The organisations that take part in the Best Workplaces Programme do so for many reasons. Benchmarking against peers, understanding what employees think about the corporate culture and providing greater reporting and insight for managers to identify where action is needed are some of the reasons organisations are motivated to enter.

"The Programme is an acknowledgement of the culture, values and behaviours that sit at the centre of our business," says Mike Healy, Employee Engagement Manager at

dunnhumby, which has now appeared in the ranking for five consecutive years.

Sera Miller, CEO and founder of Material Communications Group, adds: "Our primary motivation has always been to gain the external insight into our own internal programmes and activities: to have the expertise and assessment for us to use to validate our current strategy and evolve it effectively for the future."

But these are not just nice things for organisations to do for their employees. There is a financial and societal imperative that is becoming increasingly clear through research. Employee engagement and the corporate culture that enables it are vital non-financial measures that organisations can use to improve their market value. A link exists between a company's culture of strong values as perceived by their employees and organisational performance, according to a University of Chicago Study<sup>1</sup>, which helped inform our report<sup>2</sup>, *Organisational Values – are they worth the bother?* What's more, companies with high employee satisfaction in the Great Place to Work® 100 Best

Companies to work for in America, financially outperform their peers by 2-3 per cent per year, according to Edmans' review of Great Place to Work® data<sup>3</sup>.

"Our business performance over the last five years has gone from strength to strength, with more customers stocking our brands and more consumers drinking Twinings on a daily basis than ever before," says Neil Manders, Commercial Director of the tea supplier.

"We have had some great advertising and a pipeline of new products but this has not been the secret of our success. It is every employee that comes to work every day willing to go the extra mile for their friends around them. It is no coincidence that since we embarked on the Best Workplaces Programme five years ago we have had the most successful period in our history, a history that stretches back 310 years." Just as companies do not rest on their laurels when it comes to profit margins nor should they leave engagement alone once they have been recognised for it.

Engagement is clearly not a one-off exercise," Manders' colleague, Sales Director Liam McNamara adds: "It will take continued focus and effort to keep it alive – effort from everyone in the business."

For Twinings this means keeping an ongoing dialogue within teams and taking learnings from each Great Place to Work® feedback session – particularly in light of the recruitment and retention in the competitive labour market and the ever-changing external FMCG sector challenges that the company faces.

Talent is also a key issue in the creative communications industry. Sera Miller says that sustaining the engagement that her company has achieved with its Laureate status will be important in tackling this: "We believe that never taking for granted what we have achieved will be how we sustain this success and crucially, sustain the culture that makes us who we are."

Maintaining engagement levels as

## LAUREATES

This year, five organisations have achieved a place in the ranking for five consecutive years, making them Laureates of the Best Workplaces Programme.



### Flight Centre

"There is a culture of 'owning' one's own career".



### dunnhumby

"The Programme continues to help us champion the importance of our culture and highlights what matters most to our people."



### Material Communications

**Group** "Living and breathing being a 'great place to work' is what gets us up and into the office every morning."



### Twinings

"The initiatives that we focus on to make improvements in the business are also owned, driven and brought to life by our employees which ensures that they are embedded properly."



### Virgo Health

"We put our people first and foremost. We're constantly supporting and investing in them and their individual development. It's our top priority."

## MASTERS

Two organisations have this year joined the ranks of the Best Workplaces Masters, meaning they have been recognised as a Best Workplace 10 years in a row.



### Bright Horizons Family Solutions

"The company has a distinct and special culture."



### National Instruments

"I feel I am treated as a person not just a number, and I have been given a lot of responsibility and opportunities. I love my job."



a business evolves or grows – and its culture invariably changes – can also be a challenge. New Laureate dunnhumby has launched a new leadership programme called 'Leading Others' to develop the company's managers to lead and engage employees in the best possible way. Already the company's leaders have a "huge appetite and desire to receive their reports and understand how employees feel working in their team", and the company has local action plans in place to allow different teams to focus on improving the areas that matter the most and those they can influence. "Joining these action plans up with their respective leadership teams will help build a robust plan

to sustain and hopefully improve engagement levels throughout the business," Mike Healy says.

Leadership plays a vital role in sustaining engagement. Now that it has also made the Best Workplace's ranking for the fifth consecutive year, Virgo Health will "constantly challenge itself, grow and evolve", according to joint CEOs Angie Wiles and Sarah Matthew. They – along with other senior staff members – mentor junior members of staff and "constantly give input into account work and provide insight from their years of experience within the industry". "We will continue to develop our people through our mix of internal and external training, encouraging them to inspire and

motivate each other in particular areas of interest at every level," they say.

Engaged employees are more motivated to succeed and their employers experience improved return on investment. But business is not the only winner from high levels of engagement. Employees who are happier at work are generally happier in other areas of their lives too which, along with better behaving and more trustworthy employers, means engagement has a positive effect on the whole of society.

<sup>1</sup> The value of corporate culture, September 2013. Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza, Luigi Zingales. University of Chicago

<sup>2</sup> Organisational values: Are they worth the bother? November 2014. Great Place to Work® Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Employee satisfaction and firm value: a global perspective, July 2014. Alex Edmans, London Business School

# SPECIAL AWARDS 2015:

Every year we recognise organisations in the Best Workplaces ranking that demonstrate excellence in specific areas of people management through the use of both established and innovative initiatives. Organisations are shortlisted through the Trust Index® survey based on their employees' perceptions of the relevant area and an in-depth audit of the organisation's policies and practices.

## DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Because of the critical role leadership plays in creating and maintaining a high trust, high engagement culture this award recognises one organisation in each category.

### Small category

**Winner - Just IT Recruitment**



"I'm particularly proud of how the leaders share in the tasks to ensure all our people are as successful as they can be. From consultant to COO, we all help one another to achieve our goals."

### Medium category

**Winner - Fleet Alliance Ltd**



"We encourage our people to have fun, to develop their skills and to look after our clients."

### Large category

**Winner - Softcat Limited**



"We put our staff's welfare at the heart of everything we do, and make sure everyone feels valued and rewarded for their contributions to the company."

## DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Winner - DMW Group**



"We have been continuously surprised at the innovation that our staff show. We're always thinking about how to improve; that's what is in our nature."

## DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN WELLBEING

**Winner - Goodman Masson**



"Our engagement programme ensures our people have the tools and infrastructure to be successful, are well and correctly rewarded and work in an environment that they want to be part of and don't want to leave."

## DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN CSR

**Winner - One Vision Housing**



"Our employees are working within some of the most deprived areas of the country, in an increasingly challenging operating environment. It is imperative that they are motivated, competent and inspired if the organisation is to creatively meet these challenges."

## DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYEE VOICE

**Winner - FISCAL Technologies Ltd**



"Right now we embrace our smallness; the CEO can speak directly to anyone in the business just by walking across our open-plan office."



Best  
Workplaces 2016  
United Kingdom



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