

Outstanding employee engagement strategy

Winner HomeServe

To say that insurance and repairs company HomeServe has been on a journey over the last few years would be something of an understatement. In 2011 the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) stopped HomeServe's UK business from selling any more products. In 2014 it was fined £34 million by the FCA for mis-selling. But cut to 2017 and things are very different indeed.

Key to reinvigorating the business has been ambitious activity around employee engagement – efforts so impressive and wide-ranging that one of our judges “felt quite jealous” to read about them. It was this broad approach and HomeServe's wealth of engagement initiatives that really made the entry stand out.

Improved team interaction and communication was one key area. Activity includes large-scale ‘Cascade’ events that take everyone in groups of up to 300, bringing nearly 3,000 people together in total in every area, from frontline call centres to engineers. Every three months HomeServe also holds ‘Charter Tuesday’ when all colleagues get together in groups of 50 to reflect on how they're living up to customer promises.

The leadership team buy-in at HomeServe is clear – as evidenced by CEO Martin Bennett's joint win of the HR Excellence Awards' Most People-Focused CEO of the Year award in 2016. Leaders actively participate in events that celebrate HomeServe values, such as the People Champion events and People Charter week. Bennett himself is very active on Yammer. He holds regular Big Conversation sessions in all six HomeServe locations and regularly undertakes customer call listening and ‘Man in Van’ days out in the field with engineers.

Recognition activity includes thank you cards that anyone can send to anyone in the business at any time, and STAR awards (Special Thanks And Recognition), which come with a financial reward and are linked to company values.



Development and wellbeing also feed strongly into HomeServe's overall engagement strategy. It operates a Career Progression Framework (CPF) that provides three development levels, each supported by blended learning modules (online, classroom, coaching, qualifications), virtual learning, and a 2020 Leaders programme. Meanwhile wellbeing activity includes knowledge share forums, sports and social events, discounts at a huge array of retailers, Know Your Numbers health checks, personalised health programmes, and emphasis on financial wellbeing with a Money Health Check tool.

With such a comprehensive approach it's little wonder one judge praised this entry as “strategic, broad, innovative, with excellent branding and good use of technology”. The company has already achieved its target of 80% employee engagement by 2020 (against a backdrop of 56% in 2013), with the latest scores at 82%. Quite simply, in the words of one judge, this is a “fantastic improvement in employee engagement”.

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Shortlisted

- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Kerry Foods
- Lawn Tennis Association
- McDonald's
- Phonographic Performance
- RHP
- Sky Betting and Gaming
- Toyota GB
- Unipart Group
- XPO Supply Chain UK

Highly commended

Wales & West Utilities

When WWU's regulatory price control period began in 2013, providing a good opportunity to reflect on its business strategy, the company realised colleagues were suffering ‘change fatigue.’ And with 10% of the workforce leaving via voluntary redundancy, it needed to put processes in place to re-motivate people, reinforce the importance of their contributions, and keep energy high.

But with a workforce of over 1,300 spread from the mountains of North Wales to the cliff tops of Cornwall, and with over 65% field based, this was never going to be easy. The solution: a range of activities geared around providing clarity on the direction of the business and the important role employees play in delivering these plans, including a revamped reward and recognition programme, a reviewed behavioural competency framework, company-wide roadshows and much more besides.

Today engagement sits at an impressive 84%, 81% have confidence in the leadership team and 81% are proud to work for WWU.

“Impressive, crisp, really good design and delivery,” commented one judge. Another: “Good outreach to a dispersed workforce... some great stuff.” The judges' praise didn't stop there: “Impressive, crisp, really good design and delivery”.