

Case study: i-level



Situation

i-level is the UK's largest independent, integrated digital communications agency, employing 140 staff in the UK. The digital communications industry is one of the most competitive, with businesses fighting aggressively for clients and staff alike. The most talented consultants are highly sought after, particularly in i-level's specialism of digital marketing, and turnover can be as high as 30%.

The previous benefits package, although adequate, was not delivering what they needed. i-level's objectives were to:

- Create excitement and awareness around the true value of the benefits on offer;
- Communicate this in a meaningful way to engage staff;
- Increase staff referrals and attract candidates motivated by better remuneration.

Thomsons Online Benefits was appointed to help them achieve these objectives. The first step was to conduct staff surveys and focus groups to understand what i-level employees wanted from their reward package.

The results highlighted that employees wanted face-to-face meetings to understand their benefits, were interested in trading one benefit for another and believed a better benefits package would improve their loyalty and engagement.

Action

As well as traditional benefits such as holiday, dental and health cover, the new scheme offers more innovative benefits such as additional half-days off on birthdays, wild card training vouchers for non-work related courses (some staff are now learning monster truck driving!), broadband and mobile phones and discounted dining.

The communications reflected the modern forward-looking personality of the company. Thomsons created the 'i' character and eyes brand, and this appeared on all communications. The campaign began by removing all mugs in the office and replacing them with 'i' character mugs on launch day as a teaser. Further communications were sent out to employees' mobile phones, including their i-Phones, were animated on the internet and distributed on USB sticks.

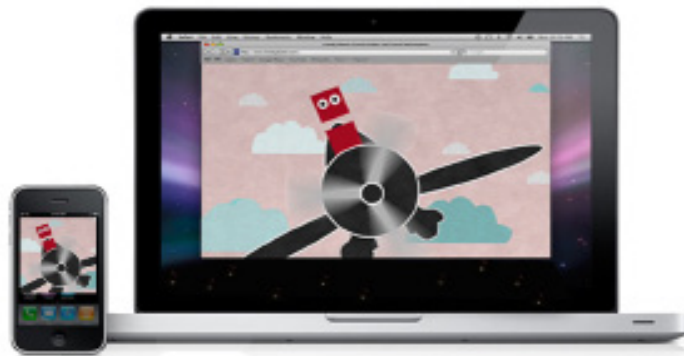
The i-benefits brand has acted as an inspiration and catalyst for the creation of i-level's first People Plan by the HR team in line with their business values of **humanity, openness, diligence, enthusiasm and integrity**. The company now actively promotes a health and wellbeing programme for staff called i-health. i-engage has been launched as an internal communication and recognition programme and i-support is the new name for the company's CSR plans.

Result

The scheme has been a success on every level. 99% of staff agreed that their benefits package has been improved, and three quarters of the workforce tailored their benefits themselves through the online portal. Pension take up has nearly doubled, and over 77% of staff agreed that the launch of i-benefits has had a positive impact on their motivation and engagement.

i-level hopes to fill 50% of staff vacancies through referrals, and improved staff retention is also having a financial impact. Reduced administration and savings through salary sacrifice add to the financial success. Introducing the scheme with their partner Thomsons Online Benefits, i-level expects to recover costs of the project, plus a further 430% ROI (net investment) in year 1 alone.

Stephen Rust, CEO of i-level comments, "The introduction of our 'i-benefit' flexible benefits programme was a key milestone in our overall company roadmap and has been incredibly well received. A great result."



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