

TRENDING:

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## Campaign Best Places to Work 2020: Top 5 large companies

the7stars has triumphed after two years in second place.



### 1 the7stars

Media agency, London | UK employees 223 | 43% M 57% F

Unlimited holiday allowance, an equal profit-share bonus, no job titles or time sheets, a "wellness room" and an office-dog rota are all part of the winning formula that have earned the7stars the top spot for Campaign's Best Place to Work for large companies in 2020.

After playing second fiddle in 2018 and 2019, in the past 12 months the media agency has introduced several initiatives that have boosted the firm's offerings to employees. It has created a "wellness room" – a permanent relaxing space with a sofa, blackout blinds, an aromatherapy diffuser and an iPad with mindful apps downloaded. The idea is for staff to go there for time with no distractions, to recharge and relax.

The agency has listened to positive feedback from staff who liked having a dog in the office to create a dog rota: there is now a weekly visit from an employee's dog, with a profile of the pet sent round each week so everyone knows which dog is visiting and where they can be found.

Aiming to build a place where "people love to work", the7stars' mission is to create a community as well as growing a business. Ideas and initiatives are encouraged and people's best efforts are recognised and rewarded – not just in terms of salary but also through initiatives such as Star Cards. Introduced in 2019, the reward scheme, "a relatively small gesture, intended to show big gratitude", can be handed to employees who have gone above and beyond or displayed behaviours that reflect agency values. The cards have rewards of varying financial value and can be cashed in for experiences, such as a trip to the races at Ascot, a manicure, a pint or smoothie, a £10 lunch voucher, an early start or late finish, or a pair of gig tickets.

With its flat structure, the agency discourages internal competition, holding weekly company meetings where the chat focuses on everything from current campaigns to new technologies and media opportunities. All employees at the7stars see the annual business plan and get involved with delivering the objectives; business numbers are shared.

This culture has been developed further with initiatives around social diversity and mental-health awareness, with more mental-health aiders, as well as "curry and chat" sessions giving people an opportunity to open up and talk. There's also an initiative called Safe Space, which takes place monthly in an offsite location where employees can talk to one another in a friendly, supportive environment.

Even during leaner times, the company continues to invest in its people, with a popular graduate programme and industry-leading maternity and paternity support. Indeed, 97% of people who started at the agency this time last year are still there. A profit-share bonus is divided equally among all staff and there is a "bonus blog", where colleagues' celebrations are shared and voted on. Winners can also double their bonus: this year it applied to five people, including one employee who used the money to help build his mum a house in Ghana.