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News release

'Hard work and ingenuity' honoured in benefits award win for ING Direct, Vebnet and Mercer HR Consulting

ING Direct, Vebnet and Mercer Human Resource Consulting have been awarded with the 'Most successful new benefits launch' title at the annual Employee Benefits Awards. The ceremony highlights the UK's elite benefits programmes, focusing on hard work, ingenuity and effectiveness. ING Direct launched flexible benefits to 580 staff in November using a 'pick & mix' communications theme, which saw creativity, scale and impact combine to ensure every employee was engaged. Other finalists in the 'most successful benefits launch' category included Coda, Kent County Council, Malmaison Hotel Group, NPower and the Royal Automobile Club.

As a business, ING Direct is already recognised in the Top 10 of the FT Best Workplace Survey and as 'The Best Call Centre of the Year' in the 2006 CCA Excellence Awards. The challenge in launching 'pick & mix' was to provide staff in 2 sites with a flexible benefits scheme to meet exacting criteria. ING Direct has a diverse workforce with many career focussed employees in its call centres and corporate departments including part time mums, young starters and students.

Amanda Wilkinson, editor of Employee Benefits magazine and one of the judges, explains, "This entry caught the attention of the judges because of its strong branding and unusual communications campaign, which included members of ING Direct's management team dressing up as ushers to deliver a bag of pick and mix sweets to every employee. The judges felt that this activity couldn't fail to catch employees' attention and also demonstrated management's buy-in and commitment to the launch of the company's flexible benefits plan. One judge was so impressed with the company's approach that she said she would copy it if the appropriate opportunity arose. ING Direct received particular praise from the judges for managing to carry all of these activities out at a relatively low cost to the business and well within its set budget".

A pre-launch teaser, the launch and a Benefits Fair were the three key communication stages. For the pre-launch teaser, members of the management team dressed as ushers to deliver a bag of branded 'pick & mix' sweets to every employee. During the launch, a roadshow of presentations were delivered by the HR Director at both company sites, with a 'pick & mix selection box' as a give away with more sweets, a brochure and a menu card to keep on their desks. Following this the 'pick & mix' branded Vebnet site went live. The Benefits Fair was attended by providers and fronted by a 'pick & mix' sweet shop at the entrance which the compensation and benefits team manned all day dressed as ushers.

Marcus Underhill, head of flexible benefits for Vebnet, says, "The teams from ING Direct, Mercer and Vebnet are simply delighted about this award. The partnership between the three organisations has been incredibly strong with each individual committed to ensure a successful launch. To have the teams' hard work honoured with this award highlights how we pull together to achieve the highest standards".

For more information, contact Vebnet at its London or Edinburgh offices via www.vebnet.com, or London – 020 7073 2710 or Edinburgh - 0131 270 5500.

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About Vebnet

Vebnet specialises in the development, deployment and support of internet based technology for flexible benefits and total reward statements. Founded in 2000 and subsequently listed on AIM (2003), Vebnet has rapidly become the leading provider of this technology. Through significant, specialist experience of the employee benefits market, Vebnet is able to identify the real business case behind implementing flexible benefits. This ensures that clients are able to achieve a rapid return on investment. Vebnet launched its FIX&FLEX product in 2002, which is now distributed via leading benefit consultants and a range of other strategic partners. **Customers include Britannia Building Society, Heineken, Informa, JPMorgan, Nationwide, PWC, SonyBMG and Virgin.**

www.vebnet.co.uk

- » For Organisations, Vebnet solutions offer a branded vehicle to communicate the value of their total rewards, help differentiate themselves from competitors, harmonise terms and conditions and deliver tangible results to the bottom line.
- » For HR, Vebnet solutions simplify benefits administration and strengthen reporting and management capabilities, aiding the campaign to recruit, motivate and retain employees.
- » For employees, Vebnet solutions enable organisations to provide appealing and valued benefit choices and show individuals just how much investment is made into their benefit packages. Access is available 24/7 with internet connection for an intuitive and engaging experience.
- » For global companies, Vebnet solutions provide the functionality to offer benefits to employees internationally, online and in multi-currency formats.
- » A cost-neutral voluntary benefits programme from Vebnet bundles tax efficient salary sacrifice arrangements together, to offer employees more benefit choices.

Information from www.employeebenefits.co.uk

Most successful new benefits launch

Winner

ING Direct - Pick and Mix (entered by Vebnet; advised by Mercer Human Resource Consulting)

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ING Direct's decision to move to flex was made as a result of feedback from staff focus groups, which indicated that employees felt their perks were difficult to access and were not relevant to everyone. The launch also included presentations hosted by the company's HR director at both of its sites and a benefits fair which gave staff the opportunity to meet their benefits providers. The fair was attended by ING Direct's compensation and benefits team which hosted a pick and mix sweet shop at the event.

ING Direct received particular praise from the judges for managing to carry all of these activities out at a relatively low cost to the business and well within its set budget.