

The Recruiters Hangout's Best Companies to Work For **2014**

Curated by **Colleague Software** and featuring recruitment businesses from The Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies to Work For 2014 list



Every year The Sunday Times carries out one of the most respected and extensive research initiatives into employee engagement in the UK. Within the Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies to Work For List (up to 250 employees) it was fantastic to see a vast array of featured recruitment agencies. Consequently the team at ***The Recruiters Hangout (#rechangout)***, including *Colleague Software*, *Abtech Partnership*, *The Recruitment Alliance* and *UK Recruiter* got together to host an engaging Google+ hangout featuring decision makers from some of these leading businesses – including *Spencer Ogden*, *Macildowie*, *La Fosse Associates*, *Phaidon International* and *Arrows Group*. We've put together a short case study on each of these businesses outlining what they went through to become businesses that recruiters love to work for.



ARROWS GROUP™

Arrows Group is a multi-sector specialist focusing purely on the TMT (Technology, Media, and Telecommunications) and Healthcare sectors. Established in 2003, Arrows Group employs over 130 staff across fantastic offices based in the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany. Within these core markets, Arrows Group has built a client base of just over 400 companies, based mainly in Europe with some in Asia and South America. The company has tripled turnover in the past three years, and has been recognised as the sixth Fastest Growing Recruitment Company in the UK (Recruiter Fast 50 2013). Following successful expansion into mainland Europe, Arrows Group is considering extending operations to new markets in Asia and South America. The company is privately owned with 100% share ownership split between the founders and employees; there are no external investors or third parties.



Adrian Treacy COO

“For me, what makes Arrows Group a great recruitment company to work for is simple: hire good people with similar values and great attitudes, invest in their personal development so they flourish, and provide a great working environment and facilities. With these ingredients, and passionate and experienced leaders, everyone will enjoy success and grow. And with growth comes opportunity.”

The 8 Factors of Workplace Engagement

1) Management: Most of the company's managers have been promoted from within, starting as trainee consultants. This internal progression fosters a sense of empathy that ensures managers recognise and reward their teams, knowing what they are asking of them is realistic and achievable. Managers are encouraged to respect an individual's workload and life outside of work; an approach that is reinforced through the company's policies and training.

2) Leadership: Both James Parsons (CEO) and Adrian Treacy (COO) are passionate leaders, inspiring and motivating teams and individuals without stifling their creativity and personalities. This approach extends to all senior managers, who encourage employees to exploit their talent to the fullest extent, giving them the confidence to take an idea and run with it.

3) Company Engagement: Empowerment is not just a marketing buzzword at Arrows Group – employees have a genuine voice in the company's future direction, and many current successes originated from an employee's initial idea. The company has invested in several forums to engage with employees, both online and offline, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to influence the company's operations.

4) Personal Growth: All Arrows Group employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal growth, and to take advantage of the company's diverse training and development programmes. Feedback is paramount in ensuring that every employee reaches their full potential, and Arrows Group embraces a 360-degree approach to achieve this.

5) Teamwork: Since inception, teamwork has been an integral part of Arrows Group's success over the past decade. Incentives and awards form a large part of how teams are encouraged to strive for success, bringing together some of the industry's brightest and most capable individuals to form high-performing teams. Naturally, this creates a very social environment that reinforces how teams collaborate.

6) Giving Something Back: Employees are able to participate in charitable activities, either through the company's organised activities and nominated charity, or through their individual contributions. Arrows Group recognises its responsibility to play a socially responsible part in society, and we take that responsibility seriously with our co-founders setting a great example for others to follow.

7) Fair Deal: Compensation in recruitment is often a contentious subject, but not at Arrows Group. Our values – united, open, bespoke – embody our approach to remuneration, that extends beyond obvious factors such as salary. We have a diverse range of benefits that can be tailored by the employee, for the employee, ensuring employees share in the company's continued success

8) Wellbeing: Arrows Group is committed to ensuring our employees' wellbeing, offering 27 benefits that help achieve that ever-elusive work-life balance. This is particularly important to us given the demands of the recruitment sector and the challenges they present in reaching that balance.

La Fosse Associates specialises in recruiting technology and digital talent from top to bottom. We operate at all levels of a technology organisation on a permanent, contract, interim and executive search basis.

Our Vision is simple – to build an incredible company by treating people well.

So we focus our efforts on achieving Two Ambitions:

- 1) To be the number one Best Company to work for in the UK
- 2) To lead by example to achieve a step change in candidate care in the recruitment industry.

The Best Companies Award gives us a great framework and an objective measurement for how we are doing against achieving the first Ambition.



James Parker Managing Director

“Our aim is to build an incredible company by treating people well. This way, we can all look back and see that, together, we’ve built something significant, something special, when viewed from any angle.

Internally, financial performance is perhaps our least important measure: if we do the right things that will take care of itself. We focus on looking after and developing our people. But make no mistake; we don’t do this just because we feel it’s what we should do, we work this way because we believe it is the most efficient way to build a world class, high performance business.”

The 8 Factors of Workplace Engagement

1) Management: A third party ran a 360 review on all of our senior managers, which formed the basis of a comprehensive Coaching programme to improve their effectiveness.

2) Leadership: Our CEO Simon La Fosse was ranked as the UK's Best Leader 2014 at the Best Companies Award – 97% of staff saying they were inspired by his values-led approach to business.

3) Company Engagement: Our company vision, ambition and values were not handed down by management. Instead, we took the whole company off site to talk about what we all wanted to be known for, then refined, checked and agreed it.

4) Personal Growth: Creating the conditions for good people to excel includes challenging them to do more than they thought they were capable of, as well as supporting them with the tools and training they need to do the job. So in addition to comprehensive training, we also provide an external Executive Coach to support a personal development programme.

5) Teamwork: Hiring people who believe that you achieve more as a team helps, but teamwork is a dynamic, not an event, so we put a lot of things in place to keep barriers from forming: for example every manager mentors someone from another division; each team has hot desks so others can come and work with them for a day. In fact, 66% of all our revenue comes from work given to one consultant by another, which demonstrates the emphasis we place on teamwork.

6) Giving Something Back: La Fosse runs a school programme to help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, to help develop their employability skills (which has the side effect of reminding our Recruiters they work with people at a sensitive time in their lives and to keep that in the front of their mind when helping candidates).

7) Fair Deal: La Fosse Associates is committed to gifting 40% of the equity of the organisation to employees over time. This level of shared ownership is unique within our industry and really makes a difference when it comes to attracting top talent, and driving the right long term behaviors.

8) Wellbeing: We will be able to treat our candidates and clients better if we look after ourselves:

Physical - free gym membership is no good unless people have the confidence to use it, so we have a number of sports teams and set challenges to get people out of the office, which definitely helps productivity throughout the day.

Mental – We respect working effectively, not working long hours by default. Encouraging people to take little breaks throughout the day, and proper breaks at lunch helps, and (although it was met with a little scepticism at first!), so does the option of free hypnotherapy sessions.

Emotional – The team work hard, so we work hard to make them feel good about it: Random Acts of Kindness best describes our approach, from free fruit to taking the whole company on a ski trip (as opposed to just the top billers).



PHAIDON
INTERNATIONAL

Phaidon International is a multi-award winning recruitment company that delivers excellence to clients across 44 countries, through 8 specialist recruitment brands.



Kieran Behan Managing Director

"Investing in our staff's wellbeing and happiness has been at the heart of our success and the key to growing our business and ensuring that we retain the best talent."



PHAIDON
INTERNATIONAL

The 8 Factors of Workplace Engagement

1) Management: Our managers are set quarterly, monthly and weekly SMART objectives to ensure that our members of staff are aware of our expectations and thus are recognised once they achieve them. We have established a highly successful mentoring scheme which has enabled our senior management team to work more effectively through meeting with their associated director on a regular basis. We also encourage regular one to one meetings with all members of the team and across the various divisions within the business to ensure everyone is able to communicate in-depth feedback. Listening, gaining feedback and questioning our staff on our current processes is of great importance to us as an organisation. In order for us to run a successful business it is critical our staff feel happy in their job role.

2) Leadership: After pursuing a recruitment career with Huxley Associates, Adam Buck established Selby Jennings- a financial recruitment company from his home in May 2004. Initially the vision was to leave behind a legacy, however his vision grew to establish an additional six micro-specialist brands that were in demand from the client community.

As the business evolved Adam created Phaidon International to ensure a compelling “golden thread”. Ultimately Adam’s clear vision and strategic direction has enabled the group to undergo a compound annual growth rate of over 34%, year on year, achieving an average of 25.3% EBITDA.

3) Company Engagement:

A) Communicating our vision:

Our vision is simple: 100% organically grown, enabling exceptional careers. We have a clear strategy and it is working to deliver us competitive advantage and superior financial results. We are committed to maximizing our group performance.

To achieve this, we have clear and consistent criteria governing all investment and operational decisions. We call these our “magnificent seven” and they exist to shape a business that delivers:

- 1) Superior financial performance
- 2) The correct business mix
- 3) Group synergy
- 4) Robust systems and full compliance
- 5) A simple legal and financial structure
- 6) Excellent leadership, development and succession of our people
- 7) An efficient organizational structure

B) Communicating our Primary Purpose:

As the business world is complex, ever changing and uncertain. Hard work alone will not guarantee our business success, it needs to be combined with excellent business decisions. Therefore throughout our portfolio of brands Ability, Character and Loyalty underpin and drive our performance. We regularly communicate our values via the intranet, quarterly round-up meetings held by our CEO Adam Buck, the monthly newsletter, staff briefings, regular internal emails, posters throughout our international offices as well as marketing material- even down to mouse mats!. This ensures that we;

C) Communication Strategy:

We have created an in-house internal communication tool through our intranet which enables our staff to share ideas through the “Discussion Forum” by selecting the relevant individual/group of individuals as well as post messages on the interactive “Notice Board”. Our in-house marketing team carry out “Marketing Forums” each month whereby they collate feedback on marketing initiatives and provide staff with the opportunity to share suggestions and ideas on current and future projects.



PHAIDON

INTERNATIONAL

4) Personal Growth: We have invested £320,000 in learning and development the last financial year through the 13 week "Learn to Earn" training and development programme to ensure our consultants feel confident in their new job role and are supported. Ultimately this ensures successful results as it equips them with the skills and expertise required to progress within their role as a recruitment consultant.

Here at Phaidon we appreciate that people have different ways of learning, some prefer to understand the theory of how to do things, others just want to dive in and have a go. Therefore our 13 week programme uses a combination of learning techniques; classroom learning, live calling sessions, on the job development and 1to1 coaching. This ensures the consultants get the best possible start to their careers.

We recognise that recruitment is not an exact science. Every successful recruiter has their own individual style, and as such our training programme is designed to introduce our consultants to different approaches. Consequently our consultants develop a style that works for them and more importantly a style that suits your candidates and the market they operate in.

Our vision is simple: 100% organically grown; this means everyone who works within our group has the opportunity to grow and develop in line with the vision.

5) Teamwork: It is fundamental to Phaidon International that the organisation works effectively as a team and thus invest extensively in team building events including;

- **Quarterly Event** - Every team within the Phaidon International group has a quarterly outing in order raise morale and work in more cohesion with one other. These outings include Golfing trips, All Star Lanes bowling, Bounce, indoor skiing, karaoke and various restaurants.
- **Annual Sports Day** - Each summer we organise a Sports day which involves brand and team competitions through traditional activities e.g. egg and spoon race, sack race, relay races.
- **Charity Sleep Out** - We have recently engaged in a charity sleep out whereby our staff slept rough at Exchange Square in London to raise money for charity. This was a highly effective team building experience and has encouraged further charitable initiatives within the group.

- **Senior Management Team Building** - We invite an external HR consultant to conduct a training session with our senior management teams each quarter. This involves discussing and aligning the company strategy to each team functionality and provides an opportunity to feedback on relevant areas.
- **Annual General Meeting** - Every December we hold our AGM which involves the entire company (from all locations). The interactive meeting enables staff to gain insight on the year's activities, learn about organisation's history and future strategy and evaluate/feedback to senior management.
- **Holidays and Lunch Clubs** - As previously outlined we organise bi-annual holidays and bi-monthly lunch clubs to encourage interaction between team members.
- **Phaidon Fun Days** - We organise regularly trips for the weekend each quarter for each regional office to attend.

6) Giving Something Back: Our employees are able to participate in voluntary charitable activities during work hours without incurring financial loss every year. We donate to numerous charities that were selected by our members of staff:

- **CLEFT** - a charity which aims to research the unanswered problems in improving care for children born with cleft lip and palate.
- **Singapore Cancer Research** - dedicated to beating cancer through research.
- **Centrepont** - the UK's leading charity for homeless young people, supporting 16-25 years olds with housing, learning, health and life skills.
- **ReachOut!** - a mentoring charity working with children in disadvantaged communities to raise aspirations and help them grow in character and competence.
- **Whizz-Kidz** - is a charity that supports disabled children, giving them the chance to lead a more independent life.
- **Childline** - a 24 hour counselling service for children.
- **Make-A-Wish Foundation** - a charity granting wishes of children and young people aged between 3 and 17 living with life threatening illnesses.
- **Movember** - An annual month-long charity during the month of November in aid of Prostate Cancer UK.



PHAIDON

INTERNATIONAL

7) Fair Deal: We ensure that our staff are adequately remunerated for their hard work through our benefits package;

- **Commission** - we offer a highly competitive, uncapped commission structure for our recruitment consultants.
- **Bonus** - we offer a highly competitive bonus structure for our operations staff, enabling them to receive 20% of their salary through bonuses.
- **Bi-annual Company Holidays** - Staff who exceed their targets are invited to company holidays most recently to the MGM Grand in Las Vegas however we have also visited Morocco, Barcelona and the ski resort of Chamonix.
- **Bi-monthly lunch clubs** - when our staff meet or exceed their targets they are invited to our bi-monthly lunch club; locations have included Claridges, Hakkasan, the Shard and the Oxo Tower as well as many other incredible Michelin starred establishments.
- **Awards** - We distribute monthly "Onwards and Upwards" awards to 4 members of staff if they have added value or innovation to the Phaidon International Group. These members of staff are mentioned in the newsletter which is distributed to our international offices and invited to the bi-monthly lunch club.
- **Deal envelopes** - we distribute deal envelopes for every deal the consultants ring which contains various prizes from £50 vouchers to lunch for a week.
- **Other Incentives** - includes attending Award ceremonies, lie in days, free breakfasts and lunches and team activities - most recently All Star Lanes and Bounce!
- **Healthy living** - we advocate the ability to maintain a healthy work life balance, people are actively encouraged to stay fit with showers at the office, discounted gym membership, free fruit and vending machines with health conscious snacks.
- **Annual Leave** - 24 days holiday each year as well as bank holidays and additional "duvet days"

8) Wellbeing: We advocate the ability to maintain a healthy work/life balance and therefore we encourage our staff to engage in interests outside of the organisation through flexible working hours. We also provide free fruit every day and supply the vending machines with health conscious snacks to encourage healthy eating. In addition our staff are actively encouraged to stay fit with showers at the office and highly discounted gym membership at Nuffield Health and Virgin Active. We also provide our employees with Simply Health Insurance once they have worked for the organisation for 3 months. This enables our employees to be refunded for private health care.

SPENCER OGDEN

Spencer Ogden recruits the best international talent across all energy sectors, providing industry leading services to our clients and candidates at every stage of the project life cycle. Our global network of international offices give you access to the world's most exciting permanent, contract and temporary positions, executive search and project hire, offering a world of opportunity to our candidates and clients.

With offices in the UK, Middle East, Asia Pac, Africa, Canada and the US, you'll find us at the heart of industry growth, keeping pace with changing technologies and building strong, long-lasting relationships along the way.

To meet the challenges, we bring local knowledge with a global perspective and work within the political, geographical, social and cultural reality, not against it.

Spencer Ogden represents clients and candidates at mid to senior levels who operate globally within: Oil and Gas, Power Generation, Nuclear, Renewable, Smart Energy, Finance and Trading, Mining

Named as the most 'Outstanding Fast-Growth Business' at the Global Business Excellence Awards in January 2013, and awarded with a 'Best Companies 3 STAR Accreditation' for the second year running, we build our own talent from the ground up. Our Graduate Academy is an intensive training ground for the world's top graduates. Thanks to the know-how of leading managers and directors, we turn them into the best recruitment professionals in the industry.



Tina de Munnik Sales Director

"Our Graduate Academy plays a huge part in making us a great recruitment company to work for. We build our talent from the ground up, meaning that our employees have grown with the company and so they can fully share in its success".

The 8 Factors of Workplace Engagement

1) Management: Spencer Ogden prides itself in not having a one size fits all approach to management which is reflected in our emerging leaders academy. Managers are encouraged to really get under the skin of their staff, understand their motivations and aspirations ensuring they are fully engaged.

2) Leadership: David Spencer-Percival is the figurehead for Spencer Ogden and he IS the culture of Spencer Ogden. The quirky offices, the crazy incentives and the pace in which the business grows are all down to his unique style and entrepreneurial spirit which is infectious.

3) Company Engagement: The culture we have created at Spencer Ogden is unique and synonymous with the brand we have developed - a brand associated with success, growth and rewards. Spencer Ogden staff feel passionate about working for the business and feel proud to be part of the journey that we are on.

4) Personal Growth: Spencer Ogden offers a totally meritocratic environment based on performance in the job, with staff able to increase base salaries month on month. A global training team, dedicated to inducting and developing both junior staff and emerging leaders.

5) Teamwork: Each team at Spencer Ogden and indeed sub team competitive so there is a real spirit of competition internally that helps create the environment and office atmosphere.

6) Giving Something Back: Last year Spencer Ogden raised over £16,000 for Help the Heroes by taking part in 'Rat race' – an extreme assault course aimed at breaking even the fittest of individuals.

7) Fair Deal: The philosophy is simple; if you perform you will be rewarded. With a generous commission scheme, opportunities to progress and lots of incentives, Spencer Ogden rewards its best performers. Spencer Ogden even created an Elite membership club for those who surpass all expectations.

8) Wellbeing: Subsidized gym member ships, fresh fruit delivered daily are just a few examples of how Spencer Ogden takes care of their staff.

Macildowie has built a reputation as the leading independent recruitment business in the East Midlands. With offices in Nottingham and Leicester, the team at Macildowie pride themselves on developing strong, ongoing relationships with clients and candidates ensuring they trust Macildowie to meet their recruitment and career needs.

The Macildowie team is made up of expert recruitment consultants with a wealth of experience in the disciplines they spearhead from Finance, Procurement & Supply Chain to HR and Sales & Marketing. Macildowie work with some of the biggest companies in the Midlands including E.ON, Capital One, Boots, Barclaycard and Travis Perkins.

Macildowie's people are at the centre of its brand values and that's why it was named as the 5th best small company to work for in 2014 by The Sunday Times.



James Calder Chief Executive

"Since the early 90's we have been working with clients and candidates across the region and have built some fantastic and long lasting relationships over the years."

"The leadership team works hard to ensure that our staff enjoy coming to work with flexible hours, access to industry leading training programmes, and a real focus on health and wellbeing. All of these factors have helped us secure 5th place in The Sunday Times 100 best small companies to work for 2014."

The 8 Factors of Workplace Engagement

1) Management: We work hard to ensure the management team at Macildowie is approachable and easy to engage with. We were extremely proud to finish top in the aforementioned 'My Manager' category but we also realise we can continue to improve. We often bounce ideas off one another and take on board feedback, as we strive to maintain our number one status.

2) Leadership: It's all about the leadership. Leadership defines the culture and the culture drives staff engagement. We came first in the 'My Manager' category in the Sunday Times assessment this year so we're doing something right! We've launched our brand new 'Emerging Leaders' programme to give consultants the opportunity to find out what management looks and feels like, without jumping in headfirst.

3) Company Engagement: We want our employees to view working at Macildowie as more than a job. We believe that nothing is more critical to our success than the culture of our business. We have developed a culture, which allows our employees to flourish, share ideas and to inspire better performance.

4) Personal Growth: We believe that our consultants are better trained than most other recruitment consultants. As a result, we're able to offer our clients a more complete and enjoyable service, which in turn increases their trust in us, with our ultimate goal being to gain their ongoing loyalty to Macildowie.

We love ambitious people at Macildowie and help personal development wherever we can. Our aim is to keep developing our people ensuring they are the 'go to person' in their professional space.

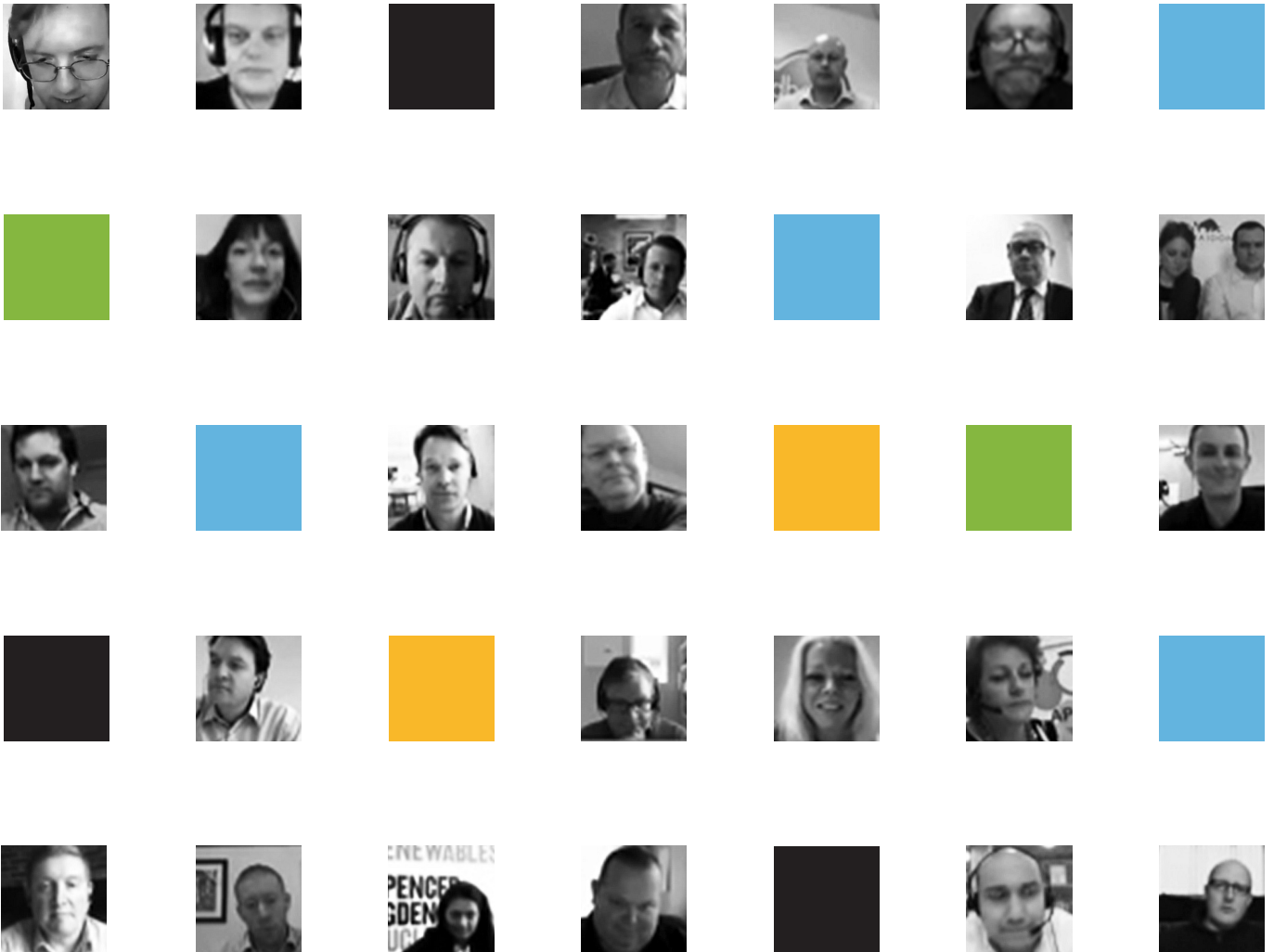
5) Teamwork: Our employees help maintain and enhance the current ethos and culture we have in place at Macildowie. As a team we enjoy our work, are happy and engaged, and ultimately realise our own personal potential, whilst working with like-minded people.

6) Giving Something Back: We've just introduced flexible working for all staff, with the impact proving to be incredible on both the work and family life of our staff. We also give staff an extra day holiday for their birthday and our annual incentive trip to Las Vegas still remains firmly in place.

7) Fair Deal: We pride ourselves on being one of the best payers in the recruitment industry. We offer extensive rewards packages including quarterly bonuses, car allowance targets, enhanced pension scheme, and a company Smartphone, to name but a few.

We also realise it's not all about the pounds in your pocket and offer excellent incentive packages including a New York trip for new starters, 'Budget Buster' rewards and employee of the month awards, amongst other great extras.

8) Wellbeing: Employee wellbeing is very important to us. Last year we negotiated a deal with a personal trainer and nutritionist to help us stay fit, eat healthily, and ultimately to help us work smarter not harder, with increased energy levels.



Every other Wednesday at 1pm GMT

Join the Recruiters Hangout live as special guests and industry experts share their top tips, insights and advice with a live online audience and a regular panel via Google+ Hangouts on Air.

Find out more and sign up, visit:
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