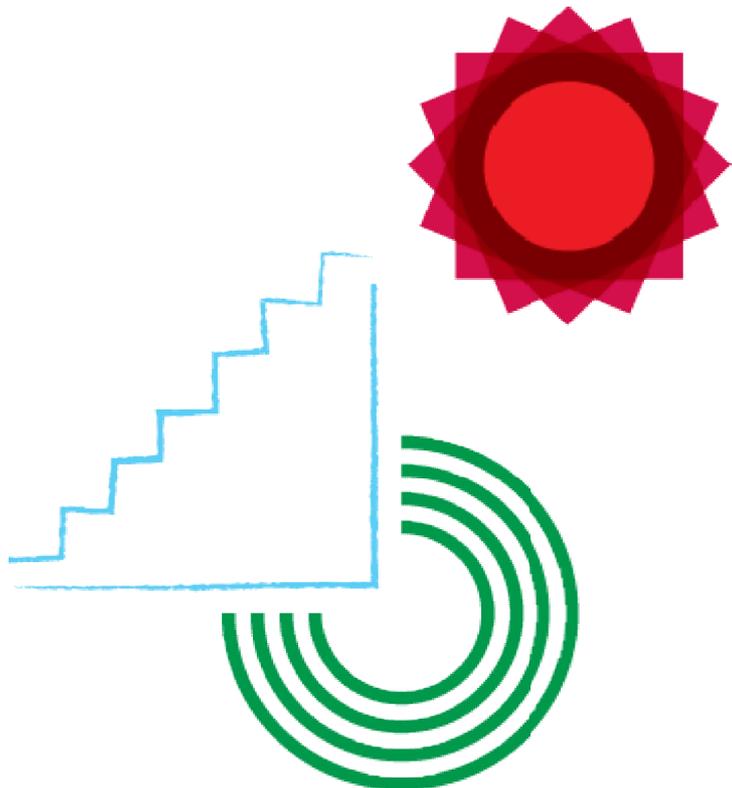


ENGAGE  
FOR  
SUCCESS

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT FLAMINGO (LONDON)

Story



## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT FLAMINGO (LONDON)



### Background

Flamingo is a brand and insight consultancy, founded in 1997 by Kirsty Fuller and Maggie Collier, who still run the company. We came into being to deliver incisive, creative brand thinking illuminated by profound people insight and cultural understanding. What characterises Flamingo is a spirit of opportunity. We believe in unlocking potential. We're restlessly curious, never standing still. We're open to ideas, wherever they may come from. And we aim to inspire our clients, and our talent, with a sense of the possible, and how to achieve it.

Flamingo London has a headcount of 85 and a turnover of £ 15M. We have four other offices, in New York, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo. We're working all around the world, all the time.

### Our Approach

In 2011 group profit grew by 20% in aggregate and by 36% 2011 vs 2010. Our investment in our people was recognized by our Top 50 ranking in the 2011 Sunday Times Best Small Companies to Work For, and being named overall Winner of their Best Training & Development award. In late 2009 the company embarked on a major new business programme which required people at all levels to invest significant time and energy for it to succeed. This started to bear fruit in 2010 but its full impact became clear in 2011. In the last quarter of the year, more than 30% of work commissioned was from new clients.

Our staff retention rate has remained consistently above 90% since our launch in 1997, but with our London office headcount growing significantly every year (it rose from 39 in 2009 to 50 in 2010, to 72 in 2011, and 85 in 2012), Flamingo has been investing in a raft of new employee engagement initiatives to ensure our culture sticks, and people continue to receive the right mix of pastoral support and creative autonomy they need to feel fulfilled.

**Culture Time** is a new programme whereby everyone has opportunities to visit cultural events on company time and share their ideas via our blog or brainstorm. Destinations include Tate Modern, Camden Arts Centre, and upcoming Olympic cultural events. Around half the junior staff has taken part.

**Trading Places** is our exchange program, formally launched this year, to give Flamingos opportunities to experience client and partner businesses, including Unilever, Stylist, BBDO, Criteria. The objective is providing a 360 learning experience by immersion in client or supplier culture. In addition, nine London-based Flamingos went on **Inter-office secondments** (three to

China, two to Tokyo, three to New York, and one to Singapore. While there, they collaborated with local colleagues and clients, and helped embed our Total Learning programme by exporting new ideas and best practice around training and development.

**Away days** help foster a strong culture and provide a future vision. Last year we took 120 people to Ibiza, from five offices. This year, 95 London (and NY) Flamingos travel to Barcelona.

**Community work** remains important; we expanded our work with youth charity **Partners in Hope**, recruiting one care-leaver full-time. We again supported **Give and Gain Day** - volunteers swapped laptops for spades to transform a derelict corner of a school into a garden. We're establishing our first academic partnership, with **Goldsmiths University** – to speak at seminars and offer placements.

We've recently put a **Vegetable Garden** on our 4<sup>th</sup> floor balcony; introduced free tasty **Wednesday Breakfasts**; and for our new **Artist in Residence Programme**, local artists exhibit in our office. Weekly **Thursday Sessions** give Flamingos a platform to speak on personal passions e.g. Motherhood in China, Gentrification in Brixton.

Finally, we enjoyed lots of other out-of-work activities, including **Football, Netball and Running teams, yoga, pilates shiatsu and kettle bells**. Our **Cycle to Work Scheme** has been hugely successful – nearly a third of our team now commutes by bike.



Members of the Flamingo London team pose with the London 2012 Olympic Torch.