

Reward Case Study:

L'Occitane |

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Employee Rewards News: Reward Case Study: L'Occitane

Even if you would struggle to spell it unaided, you will know the international beauty brand L'Occitane. L'Occitane was founded in 1976 by Olivier Baussan with the purpose of creating a company that celebrates and preserves the traditions of his native Provence. Now, 40 years later and having earned its reputation as a prestigious global brand, L'Occitane wanted to continue its traditions of being the 'best in class' in everything it does. But more importantly, L'Occitane wanted to place its heritage values at the centre of its company culture and employee value proposition.

L'Occitane has a diverse workforce in the UK with over 600 employees (Associates) across 88 locations. The company wanted to cultivate its diverse and talented community within a business that could continue to develop its reputation as an 'employer of choice', with clear and supportive approaches to in-work policy and practice. In tackling this challenge, L'Occitane teamed up with Reward Gateway to provide an employee engagement platform that delivered on two main fronts: education and communication. The former, which allowed for timely

and relevant updates in terms of policy and company news, and the latter, which reinforced an open and honest approach to work. We caught up with Ren Patel, UK Client Success Director at Reward Gateway to find out how they supported L'Occitane to be the best in class.



Waving goodbye to staff departures

Traditionally, retail has always been a sector plagued by high staff turnover rates. Today, this problem of retention is no different and whilst L'Occitane has a good level of staff retention, this industry trend still posed a continued challenge.

Therefore, L'Occitane sought to understand wider-industry pressures and the realities of a workforce made up overwhelmingly by millennials (60%). Tackling the problem at its heart, L'Occitane looked at the why behind staff turnover, uncovering two key issues affecting employee dissatisfaction:

- A challenge to always achieve a healthy work-life balance

- Flexibility, particularly around the pressures of Christmas retail

Now, if you've ever worked in retail, you'll know that these two issues are hardly new phenomena, and equally, L'Occitane did too.

To wave goodbye to regrettable employee turnover, L'Occitane realised that something different needed to be implemented; Something that would be easy to use, engaging and something that could be easily scaled and deliver on quality.

The key problems had been identified, L'Occitane partnered with Reward Gateway to bring this to life who devised a clear platform from which to propel its engagement programme.

Wellness and the world beyond

Central to its entire proposition was the implementation of one, efficient, tailored and easy-to-use hub: 'My L'Occitane Rewards'. The platform, which is available to all its Associates, offers employee discounts at over 1,000 retailers. Aimed at creating meaningful and continued incentivisation, 'My L'Occitane Rewards' has contributed to an employee culture where 89% of its Associates say that they are proud to work for L'Occitane.

Taking the proposition outside of simply giving discounts, L'Occitane and Reward Gateway also looked to create an engagement hub that delivered greater flexibility to the lives of L'Occitane Associates. With this, the engagement hub delivered on a range of new, flexible options for Associates that included extra holiday days at anniversaries, extra time for wedding days, flexible working for Head Office Associates,

and a Relocation Allowance to encourage career development and opportunities within the L'Occitane Group.

As a final focus within 'My L'Occitane Rewards', L'Occitane integrated Reward Gateway schemes such as 'SmartTech™', which offers Associates free financing and instant access to the latest tech and 'SmartFit™', which offers leading discounts and fast access to a wide range of fitness options, to make the pay checks of L'Occitane Associates go that bit further. Partner this with childcare vouchers and cycle to work schemes and L'Occitane had an offering that could deliver flexibility and incentivisation that its workforce really valued. Most importantly, the fact that all these three elements were hosted under one centralised hub, meant that 'My L'Occitane Rewards' was a quick, easy, and accessible service for everyone.

Putting the sparkle back into Christmas

With wellness and flexibility recognised as a key focus areas for L'Occitane, together with Reward Gateway, the two companies also looked into relieving the pressures of Christmas retail periods, something that had been mentioned as an ongoing challenge within the retail industry. With this, one of the Company's primary areas of focus was to create a culture of appreciative feedback that in busier periods, is sometimes forgotten. In doing so, Reward Gateway worked with L'Occitane to enable colleagues to nominate each other for recognition via a 'P.R.O.S.P.E.R.I.T.Y Elf Nominations' which links L'Occitanes internal values with recognition. This was on top of the existing platform where important events and milestones for all employees are celebrated via 'L'Occi-celebrations', helping to recognise everything from anniversaries, to birthdays and recent

promotions. With this, the Company not only nurtured a fun, family community within the workforce but it also gave its Associates the chance to win prizes. Such is the success of this recognition and award programme that the Company is considering further ways to develop this idea.

Finally, with this vital element of fun added into an otherwise hectic period for the teams, L'Occitane focused on easing the time constraints synonymous with the busy festive period. Following feedback from Management teams a simple process was put in place which now enables management staff to plan and prepare sufficiently to allow annual leave even during the Christmas period. With this, not only have the strains of the Christmas period been reduced for its frontline management staff, but also, the L'Occitane team has received actionable proof that their voice really does matter.

The proof is in the pudding

By taking a considered, proactive and tailored approach to employee benefits, L'Occitane has proved that you can have an effect on the engagement of your teams and therefore the fortunes of your business. As it stands, L'Occitane is one of only 8 retailers featured in The Sunday Times Best 100 Companies to Work For in 2017 report.

Since the launch of 'My L'Occitane Rewards', the Company's employee engagement platform has seen a 55% increase in registrations and a 13% increase in spend. The total spend has increased to over £600K, which means a saving in excess of a massive £58K for their Associates.

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In February this year, L'Occitane also celebrated the anniversary of its longest serving UK Associate in their 20th year with a Champagne reception for everyone and a presentation of gifts. Therefore, with an employee engagement strategy that continues to put the needs of their people at the heart, the Company hopes to see many more Associates meet milestones as big as 20 years' service and beyond.