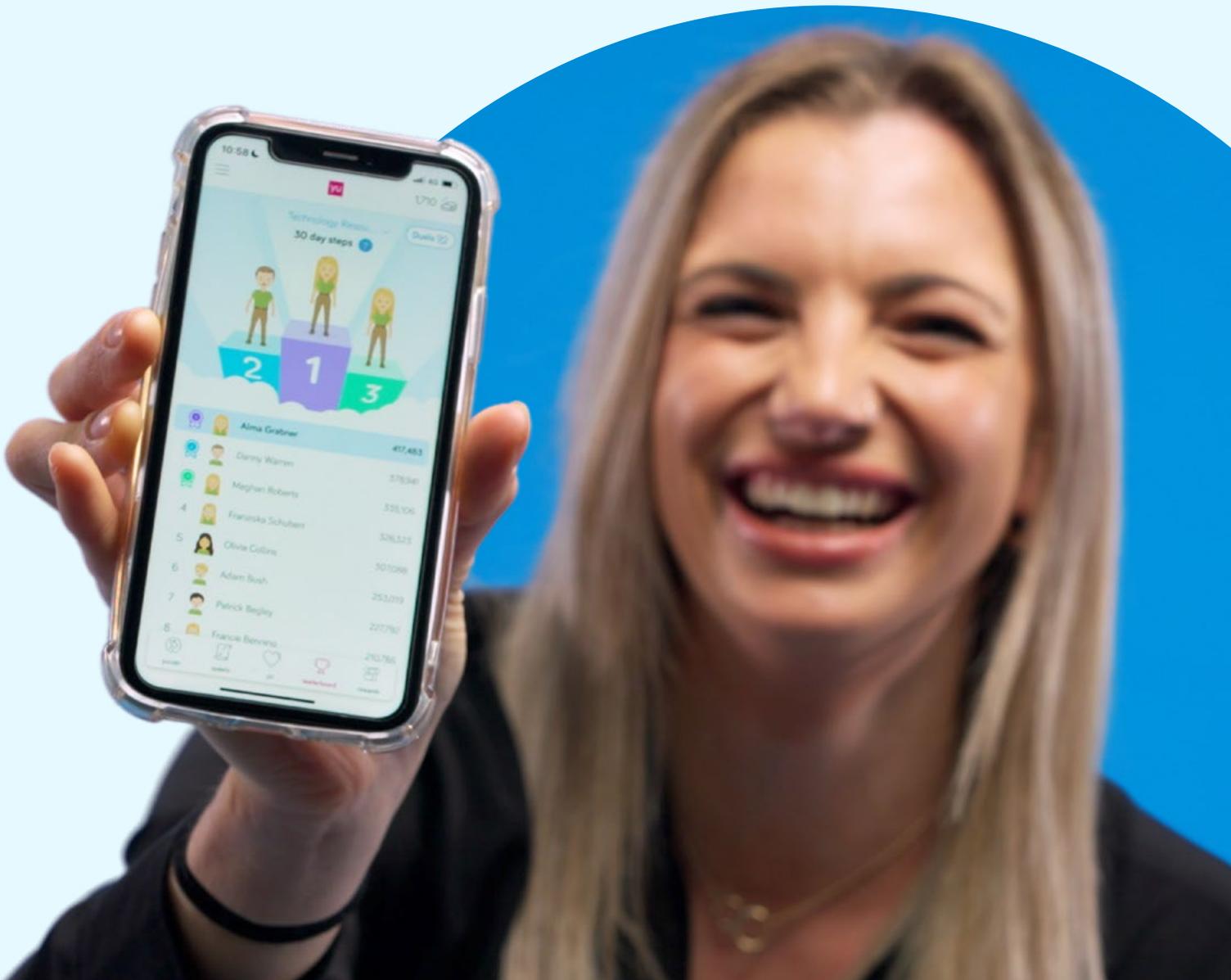




CASE STUDY

The Recruitment Race.

How this recruitment consultancy used its employee benefits to boost culture, engagement & attract top talent



Director of Operations, Alix Hobbs, shares the change in people strategy at Cloud International that gave them the edge in a competitive talent market – and maintained their culture in a new hybrid workplace.

Cloud International is a niche IT recruitment consultancy that’s achieved global success as specialists in Identity and SAP recruitment. But that success is highly dependent on the talent of its own employees, says director of operations Alix Hobbs – and that’s not something she takes lightly.

“Attraction and retention is a massive focus for us,” she explains. “We, like every business, are competing for talent. And we have the same struggles as all of our clients when recruiting to work within our own business.”

In July 2021, that challenge was highlighted nationally as the ‘Great Resignation’ took hold. Cloud International recognised the pressures, and that employee wellbeing and company culture offered them a valuable way to attract and retain the top talent in a disrupted and competitive marketplace.

“Benefits are a huge part of our employee attraction strategy, because we have to do everything we can to stand out,” explains Alix. “Everybody’s paying good salaries, everyone’s paying a commission, everyone does lunch clubs and incentives. So anything that can tip us over the edge is worth doing”

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Cloud International's
Director of Operations



About Cloud International

Cloud International is home to specialist recruitment brands with global reach, niche industry expertise and local market knowledge. Founded in 2016, its international network of offices across Europe, the UK and the US service clients across the globe with niche recruitment within the broader SAP and Cyber Security landscapes. It currently has 35 employees in the UK, based in London and Leeds.

Committed to creating an inclusive work culture, the company is proud to have 37.5% female representation and 37.5% BAME representation on its senior management team. It continues to strive for wider representation of diverse backgrounds within the industries it serves.

Protecting mental health in high-pressure roles.

Recruitment is certainly a sector in which employee wellness benefits are valued. "When it comes to our employees' mental and physical well being, we do feel very responsible, because recruitment is a tough job," Alix explains. "The long hours, the sales targets; it can all be quite stressful. The highs are very high, the lows are very low. It's not quite a standard, nine-to-five job, so we do take wellness very seriously."

"We also have many international staff who are living in London," she adds. "They're away from their native countries and their families, so we want to make sure they're happy. And we're recruiting in a competitive market, so we want the best people, and to stand out as the employer they want to join – that is massive for us."

Cloud International had previously organised employee benefits through Perkbox and Vivup. "Both were not working at all," recalls Alix. "I tracked engagement with both platforms, and it was literally zero."

YuLife, says Alix, "just ticked all the boxes. It was the answer to our insurance needs. It talked a lot about wellness, which is hugely important to us, and we also got all these benefits that employees were not using previously."

Most importantly, engagement went through the roof, with 97% of employees downloading the YuLife app. So what was behind this huge take-up, compared with the previous platforms the firm had used? Alix outlines four main reasons.



1 Launching with force

With 20 years of experience in business operations, including eight in recruitment, Alix knew that for employees to really get involved with YuLife, they'd have to put effort into launching it properly.

"I tend to find that if you don't go all in the start, the stickiness is horrific," she explains. "Instead, I wanted to create some real momentum, and get everyone engaged. So we created a 'wellness month' within Cloud International, where we had various different initiatives going on across the company."

Ultimately the goal was to launch YuLife and to get everybody engaged in it. "But we did so by creating other things around it," Alix explains. "That included everything from having healthy snacks in the office, to inviting speakers to come and talk about mental wellness and professional success. So everybody was talking about it. Everybody engaged with it. Everyone was involved. And that's what helped it get going."

2 Creating community

By getting full uptake of YuLife from the start, Cloud International created a virtuous circle. “Because everybody was on it, people got swept along with it, especially new starters,” Alix explains. “No one wanted to be the person who wasn’t on it.”

And when there were exceptions to that rule, that was interesting too. “The odd person who didn’t engage with it often didn’t end up sticking the course in the business,” Alix reveals. “So actually, a lot of the time, it’s quite a good indicator of how invested an employee is in Cloud International in general.”

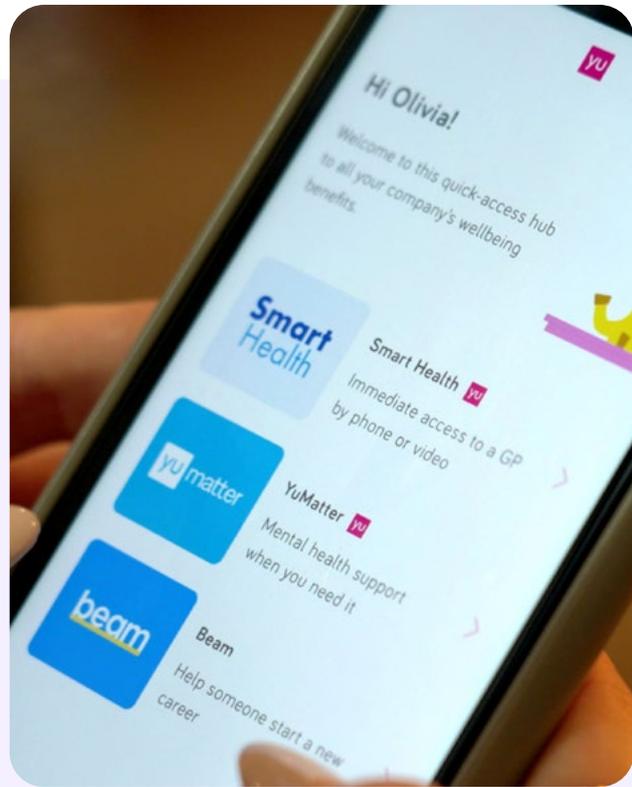


3 Making it fun

Another reason for YuLife’s popularity at Cloud International was that it harnessed employees’ natural competitiveness. “One of the things that stands out about the YuLife app, along with the ability to track steps and mindful minutes, is being able to rival each other on the leaderboard,” says Alix. “That played a big part in our launch. After all, we’re a sales business, full of highly competitive individuals that will compete over everything. The fact they could challenge each other via YuLife was a huge thing.”

4 Benefits that support

YuLife isn't just about walking and meditation, of course: employees also value the Wellbeing Hub and the help it can offer with physical and mental health problems, financial challenges and more. "A number of staff have come to me with problems that they're dealing with – or I've gone to them because it's quite clear that they're struggling with something – and I always recommend that they access the wellbeing hub," says Alix.



What employees think:



You're sat on the desk all day. It is a very high pressure environment. I think having any benefits that help a bit with your mental wellbeing, or your physical wellbeing, can make a big difference. That was one of the factors that contributed to me joining Cloud International: a company that looks after people's health, mentally and physically."

Alma Grabner
Trainee Consultant



In our job, we're not selling a product; we're selling opportunities. So that can be extremely stressful. Managing those expectations can be quite hard sometimes. Before YuLife, I didn't meditate, but now I do so every day. I take time out on the way to work to be mindful. And it's definitely made a positive impact."

Danny Warren
SAP Market Manager – DACH



Using YuLife has motivated me more to put in the steps. So far, I've donated my YuCoin to tree planting schemes and help for Ukraine. Working for a business that has environmental and social functions makes a big difference to me. As a single person you often feel quite small and that you can't do a lot. So being able to make a contribution through the company as part of a wider effort is a good feeling."

Franziska Schubert
Market Manager – SAP



It's definitely made me increase the steps that I'm doing, especially when working from home. So on the days where I'm in the office, I'll do a 30 minute walk there, then a 30 minute walk back. And if I'm working from home, it motivates me to go out for five, 10 minutes; before work, after work, or at lunchtime as well. Always want to get those coins!"

Olivia Collins

Marketing & Communications Executive

Post-Covid culture.

Partnering with YuLife, in short, has solved a number of problems for Cloud International, bringing insurance, an EAP and employee wellness benefits into one easy-to-access platform, which has driven and maintained high levels of engagement with staff – with 66% still engaging on a monthly basis, one year on.

But according to Alix, it's done more than that; it's helped to evolve the company's culture itself, in some difficult years following the pandemic.

"When I started at Cloud International in 2019, it was a very different place," she explains.

"We were a large business, we had quite high turnover. Then Covid hit, and everything changed: we basically had to throw all the cards up in the air. We employed a large number of people during the pandemic, and they all started at home."

At this point, Alix wondered, what was the company's culture? "We didn't really have one because everyone was at home, and three-quarters of the business was new. So we needed to write new rules, and now YuLife and wellness is just fully embedded in all of that."

"Overall, I am very proud of what we've created with the wellness programme at Cloud International," she concludes. "Before YuLife, it didn't exist. Not only does it exist now, but it forms a fundamental part of our culture, of what we do, of how we attract talent. And when I hear people engaging with it, I just feel very proud. So I'd definitely recommend YuLife to other businesses. It's been a game changer for us."



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Alix Hobbs

Measures of success:

YuLife at Cloud International



Engaging on a monthly basis, one year on



App downloads



UK average daily steps, one year on

About YuLife.



YuLife is a group risk insurance provider on a mission to inspire life and turn financial products into a force for good. It does this by offering the best in employee health and wellbeing benefits – and engaging employees in the activities that matter.

The App

YuLife is using behavioural science combined with elements of game design to motivate people to improve their lifestyle. Focusing on small, achievable goals, which are encouraged via friendly competition with colleagues and positive reinforcement through rewards and benefits, people are engaging with YuLife's app to change how they live – with the data to prove it works.

How YuLife is mitigating the risk of premium increases

YuLife has launched the 'Give-Back Model' to mitigate the risk of premium increases. Financially rewarding companies for having a healthier workforce includes an assessment of risk for individuals and groups, based on a set of real-time, dynamic and historic data.

As more individuals use the YuLife app and are motivated to become healthier, the underwriting risk of a company and the premium for each individual decreases.

This rebate can then be used to give employees additional wellbeing services such as resilience training and coaching, or subscriptions to wellbeing apps such as Meditopia and Fiit.

yulife.com | hello@yulife.com

