

# PEOPLE & CULTURE

How we fulfil our purpose starts with our people.



**"OUR GOAL IS TO ATTRACT, RETAIN AND GROW THE MOST TALENTED, CREATIVE AND INSPIRED PEOPLE ON THE PLANET."**

Jacqui Canney  
Chief People Officer

## OUR PEOPLE ARE OUR COMPANY

At WPP we know that our people are our Company. As we transform and help our clients to do the same, we need three key attributes: a clear purpose; a set of values that guide us; and a strong strategy for growth. All three come together in our people.

## VALUES

Our core values inform how we work, who we hire and the way we operate as a business. We foster an inclusive culture across WPP, one that is equitable, tolerant and respectful of diverse thoughts and individual expression. We aim to create a work experience where people are **open** to new ideas, **optimistic** about the future, and empowered to do **extraordinary work**.

## WORKING FROM HOME

Since the onset of the pandemic, the safety and wellbeing of our people has been our top priority. In 2020 we increased our investment in wellbeing resources and initiatives, especially in relation to mental health – see page 48. We also created new ways to connect across WPP, from CEO virtual townhalls to "safe rooms" that offer more space for open and candid discussions. We are communicating more often, from focusing on wellbeing in The Weekly, our global internal newsletter, to launching WPP TV, a new platform for our people to share their creativity, expertise and insights.

Since March 2020 the large majority of our people have been working remotely. Some offices have reopened in certain countries when local rules allowed – all on a voluntary basis for those who need or want to return – at reduced capacity and with strict safety protocols. At the peak around 95% of our colleagues were working away from the office. We developed new resources and guidance to help our people in caregiver roles, from assisting sick relatives to taking care of children studying at home.

## OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

Our people strategy is central to WPP's vision as a creative transformation company. At its heart is our goal to attract, retain and grow the most talented, creative and inspired people on the planet, those who are drawn to WPP by our purpose of building better futures. The strategy is based on three key pillars: being the employer of choice for all, modernisation of experiences and growth.

## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR ALL

Being the employer of choice for all rests on our ability to hire and retain exceptional, diverse talent. Diversity and difference power creativity – from sex, gender, race and ethnicity to sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, family status and so much more. To succeed, we are seeking out people who can bring more of these different perspectives to our client work, which is why we are partnering with

organisations such as Brixton Finishing School, RARE recruitment, the One Club For Creativity and adfellows.

We are also listening more closely to our people. When we understand their experiences and learn from them, we create a deeper sense of belonging and an inclusive environment where everyone can do inspiring creative work. To this end, in 2020 we launched our first all-staff survey in our top five markets to better anticipate our people's needs and to shape our people strategy. This helped to form our 2021 Listening programme, which started with WPP Pulse – an anonymous, quarterly global survey, designed to gather and act on unfiltered, honest feedback.

In June 2020 we made a number of commitments to advance racial equity. We view this work as a moral and business imperative. We committed to take decisive action on each of the 12 points in the "Call for Change" open letter from more than 1,200 Black advertising professionals to the industry; to use our voice within and beyond our industry; and to invest \$30 million over three years to fund inclusion programmes within WPP and to support external organisations. We set out our progress against these commitments on page 49 of this report, and in more detail in our Sustainability Report.

100,000  
people

95%

of employees worked from home  
at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic

50

editions of all-staff newsletter  
*The Weekly*, with 1.8 million  
unique opens

100%

of our employees have access to the  
Employee Assistance Programme

51%

of our senior managers are women

28

CEO virtual townhalls in 2020,  
with over 39,000 total participants

Much work remains, but we have made good progress on gender diversity. The proportion of women in executive leadership roles increased to 40%, compared to 37% in 2019, and 43% of the Board are women. We are currently running several successful gender diversity initiatives including WPP Stella, a senior leadership and networking group, and women's development programmes such as Fast Forward and Walk the Talk. In 2021 we were named an industry leader in the Bloomberg Equality Index for the third consecutive year.

In June 2020 we launched WPP Unite!, a cross-agency LGBTQ+ community, which advises on policies that impact the LGBTQ+ talent of WPP and its agencies. This year we were proud to be named one of the Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality in the 2021 Corporate Equality Index.

#### MODERNISATION OF EXPERIENCES

We are using technology to improve the experiences of our people, in the same way we use it for our clients and their customers. We are centralising our systems to provide the data-driven insights for improved decision-making. We are offering more user-friendly self-service tools, deploying new people management software and helping our teams match employee skills to client needs more effectively. And we continue to bring more of our people into modern, world-class Campuses, targeting 85% of employees by 2025.

Together these modernisation initiatives to simplify and standardise how we work form part of our wider business strategy to generate cost and efficiency savings – which will help us reinvest in talent and incentives to drive our growth. For more on these and other initiatives, please turn to the Chief Financial Officer's statement on page 58.

#### GROWTH

Talent is the life force of WPP. When we ask our people what they want, opportunities to grow and learn rank near the top. That is why we invest in new hires, training and skills development, to help us compete and to grow our people, teams and business.

We have named many dynamic new leaders in the last year, from internal promotions and external hires. In 2020 we appointed Simona Maggini as Country Manager for Italy, Nick Lawson as Global CEO of MediaCom, Andy Main to lead Ogilvy, and Adam Gerhart as Mindshare Global CEO, along with other senior leaders like Kirk McDonald, Devika Bulchandani and Rachel Higham. In 2021 we appointed Beth Ann Kaminkow as Global CEO of VMLY&R Commerce and Rob Reilly as WPP's Global Chief Creative Officer.

We spent £19.7 million on training in 2020 with 77% of our people taking part in formal training programmes. During 2020 we continued to work with our leading technology partners such as Adobe,

Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Salesforce to enhance our technical expertise and gained over 21,000 accreditations and certifications.

This year, we are increasing our investment in development programmes to hone the skills and capabilities we need to transform and deliver on our business strategy. We are investing more in leadership development programmes for women, people of colour and the next generation of leaders, because our growth depends on effective, diverse leadership for many years to come. And we have launched our new Career Explorer platform, which provides greater transparency into job openings so current and prospective employees have access to more career paths across WPP.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

We plan to invest an additional £150 million annually by 2025 in our people. This will be targeted at increasing talent and skills in the fast-growth areas of the industry – such as experience, commerce and technology – and boosting our capabilities in AI and machine learning. The goals are simple: strengthen skills that unlock better client relationships and results, make it easier for our people to move around our agencies, and ensure more opportunities for growth are open to all our people.

For more on our people, please turn to Employer of Choice for All on page 76.

# WELLBEING

The challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, racial injustice, political division, and many other issues around the globe have taken their toll on people's mental, emotional, financial and physical wellbeing. There are no simple answers to these complex issues that affect each person differently, but by increasing investment in wellbeing resources for our people we aim to anticipate and support their needs.

During 2020 we rolled out our Employee Assistance Programme to every market globally to offer our people and eligible family members access to free, confidential counselling and support, and we shared resources on topics such as managing stress, dealing with loss, and how to access local financial or legal help.

We launched our "safe room" series in response to horrific acts of racially motivated violence in the United States, so our people would have a space for open and honest conversations. The series has since been extended to various communities including Black women in leadership and single parents.

To recognise World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness Month we curated a global programme of wellbeing sessions, highlighted educational wellbeing resources and gave our people a platform to share their personal tips and advice on how to look after our mental and emotional health during lockdown.

In May 2021, we are launching a new Mental Health Allies programme in the UK, with a pilot in the United States and the intention of rolling it out across other markets. Mental Health Allies are employees who volunteer to be trained to support others. As part of this initiative, we are building a Wellbeing Academy at the centre of WPP, where Allies and HR professionals will be able to seek support, continuous learning and advice.



**100%**  
of employees  
can access  
Employee  
Assistance  
Programme

**200**  
UK Mental  
Health Allies  
by May 2021

# OUR RACIAL EQUITY COMMITMENTS

In June 2020, we set out a series of commitments to help advance racial equity. We said we would take decisive action on each of the 12 points in the "Call for Change" open letter to the industry from more than 1,200 Black advertising professionals; use our voice to bring about change in and beyond our industry; and invest \$30 million over three years to fund inclusion programmes within WPP and to support external organisations. While there is much more work to be done, we have made progress towards these commitments as we embed diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) into everything we do.

We have established our new Global Inclusion Council to advise on DE&I goals, recommend new systems and strategies, and identify barriers to progress. We released our most recent United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data and committed to reporting our workforce diversity data annually in our Sustainability Report. To embed DE&I into our hiring and development processes, all our HR teams received anti-bias training and we launched a diverse candidate slate policy in the US and UK.

We have partnered with organisations such as the LAGRANT Foundation to help build a more diverse future talent pool and launched NextGen Leaders, a virtual learning series for college students and recent graduates. 55% of the 846 participants in 2020 were Black, Asian and Latin American. We have implemented and are expanding learning and development opportunities for our employees of colour, including our Elevate sponsorship programme. We launched our mandatory Belonging at WPP inclusion training for all staff globally and a Conscious Inclusion programme, to raise our awareness of unconscious bias. We created an Inclusive Marketing Playbook to enable WPP teams to put inclusive marketing principles and best practice front and centre. And we established our Diversity Review Panel for our people to raise any concerns regarding negative stereotypes in our work.

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have committed to updating our employees on progress against our DE&I goals each quarter.

**\$30m**

investment over three years in inclusion programmes within WPP and to support external organisations



**GLOBAL INCLUSION COUNCIL**

**i** For further detail on our racial equity commitments, please see our 2020 Sustainability Report