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The Best U.K. Public Relations Consultancies to Work For, 2006

2. Chandler Chicco Agency

A perennial fixture on our U.S. list of the Best Public Relations Agencies to Work For, healthcare specialist Chandler Chicco is now achieving the same level of excellence in the U.K., where its egalitarian culture, commitment to professional development, and focus on one of the most challenging sectors of the PR marketplace combine to create a unique environment. CCA ranked number one when employees were asked whether their firm did a good job of attracting high caliber employees and whether they were satisfied with the level of training at their firm, and in the top three when they were asked whether their firm had eliminated unnecessary bureaucracy, whether employees liked the people they work most closely with, and whether they believed their work was meaningful and worthwhile.

CCA's already comprehensive training and development program was expanded this year with the launch in the U.K. of its Phase IV training, which includes both company-wide and bespoke training activities. After conducting an in-depth needs analysis with a full-service training company, CCA began working closely with a small number of companies to deliver training solutions that meet its unique needs and fit its distinctive culture and style. In addition, the firm offers a voluntary "sounding board" mentoring program, with 80 percent participation, that focuses on unlocking creativity, providing objective career counsel, and ensuring recognition.

CCA offers flexibility around start and finish times, with established core hours. Secondments to other CCA offices are facilitated and encouraged and reached a record high last year. There's plenty of inter-office communication, too, primarily through a redesigned intranet, C3, which allows all offices to share news regarding activities, social events and best practice.

There's a fun side to the culture too: employees are entitled to a massage or a manicure once a week; fresh fruit is delivered twice a week; and lunch is provided for the whole office once a week. In addition drinks are provided by the company once a week in the evening. A comprehensive benefits package provides private healthcare, dental care, contributory pension and life assurance.

"I moved to Chandler Chicco because it is an independent firm that is non-hierarchical and gives employees career possibilities not possible at other agencies," says one respondent. "After two years, I still believe that CCA is a fantastic agency to work for. Another praises the "great atmosphere," while yet another believes "there is a true partnership with clients and a camaraderie with colleagues that I have not seen anywhere else."