

Happy Computers Ltd

The company

Happy provides IT training.

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| Sector | Other services |
| Location | South East England |
| Turnover in 2003-4 | £2.1million |
| Profit for 2003-4 | £150k |

The workforce

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| Number of employees | 40 |
| Percentage women | 55% |
| Ethnic minorities | 15% |
| Turnover | 10% |
| Percentage of women who return after maternity leave | n/a |

The challenge

Happy has been following a work-life balance agenda since 1999. They have regular twice-yearly appraisals that keep a close check on their policies and make sure that the staff are satisfied with their personalised working arrangements.

Happy was the first company in London to achieve the Investors In People Work-Life Balance Model, and won the Family Friendly Employer of the Year Award for 2003.

Response

The staff are highly motivated, thanks to a more flexible working pattern. Compared to other companies in the IT training sector, Happy has a lower staff turnover (10% compared with an average of 17%). Staff love the flexibility and say they don't really want to move on because not all companies offer it. In 2004, two of the staff who left asked for their jobs back within two weeks of starting work elsewhere. Happy took them back.

There are currently over 2000 people on a waiting list for vacancies with Happy, so they no longer need to spend money advertising posts.

Flexibility also benefits Happy's customers - for example, by allowing staff to work Saturdays or evenings and take time off during the week, Happy can train customers on weekends and evenings. The company won a Best Customer Service in the UK award in 2003.

Happy's Managing Director, Cathy, says: "We believe that by offering flexible working to all staff, we are appreciating and recognising the best assets of the company – our people."

The future

Happy will always welcome new ways of working flexibly and make changes in policy where needed. They maintain a "can do" attitude.