



## Onswitch - Highly Commended

### **Q1. Work Conditions: supporting staff in dealing with the demands of their job**

The Onswitch Values are:

Inspiring  
Passionate  
Collaborative  
Innovative  
And Honest

These values bind the team through the rare difficult times.

As an ISO 9001 and 14001 Business our processes and systems enable us to make more good days happen.

Lone working and physically demanding work conditions do not apply to most of the team. However, the training team are out and about on Bertha, Onswitch's mobile training venue. With a team of trainers located across the UK, trainers are allocated to days in their local area wherever possible, minimising overnight stays away from home and keeping travel time to a minimum. Bertha's driver necessarily spends time alone when moving from one venue to another, but the schedule is planned to optimise travel patterns and keep drive times as short as possible. Bertha's driver is in regular telephone contact with the team at head office and enjoys a strong relationship with the training team - team turnover is very rare. He also attends Onswitch socials wherever the schedule allows.

## Q2. Balanced Workload: supporting work-life balance

The Onswitch team are not required to be on-call, although all do have access to work emails from home, enabling them to undertake occasional work outside normal hours if required. This is not expected and is not the norm for the head office team, although the nature of the training roles means that often trainers will undertake admin in the evenings and weekends - all work with Onswitch part-time and most have other practice-related roles so value this flexibility.

There is no clocking in and out of the office, and trainers are trusted to account for their own time - roles are reviewed regularly to ensure that they fit with contracted hours. Of course, there are times when workloads are heavier, and the team are sometimes required to attend veterinary congresses at weekends. In such cases, Time Off In Lieu is given and event attendance is shared out amongst the team.

Everyone working at Onswitch is given his or her birthday off as an extra day's holiday (or the closest Monday or Friday if it falls at the weekend!)

### Q3. Relationships at Work: fostering effective working relationships

All new starters at head office are taken out for a team dinner in Grantham within the first couple of weeks of starting work, paid for by the company. This includes interns and BEMS students - great emphasis is placed on bonding the team together to foster strong and effective working relationships. The same happens when they leave (and many subsequently return to undertake contracted work at Onswitch.)

A comprehensive induction programme ensures new starters meet everyone early on, spending time with each department in order to appreciate their responsibilities and potential challenges. The open-door office policy and communal kitchen area (permanently stocked with tea, coffee and biscuits) make it easy to catch up with colleagues regularly away from the desk. A shared love of cake throughout the team means that each week somebody brings in treats for the team to share, usually posted on Onswitch's Facebook page to allow for external praise too!

Coaching and mentoring visiting BEMS students and new starters builds confidence and self-worth amongst the core Onswitch team, allowing them to display knowledge and develop new skills themselves.

All members of the Onswitch team join one or both of two closed Facebook groups, allowing field and office-based associates to connect daily on both personal and work matters.

The annual Cx Congress run by Onswitch's Cxclub is organised and attended by the whole team - everyone plays a part in its planning, delivery and success. One team working towards one goal, one purpose. In essence Cx Congress works as an Onswitch team building exercise as well as a showcase for the team's organisational talents.

## Q4. Personal & Career Development: enabling staff to work effectively

Every member of the team has a clear job description, detailing role responsibilities and giving clarity. Annual appraisals are undertaken with line managers, providing structured feedback and setting SMART objectives for the coming year. In addition, the open culture ('Honest' is one of Onswitch's five values) encourages daily informal feedback and recognition of a job well done.

Due credit is given for good work and valuable input - members of the team at every level, including interns, are able to present their work to clients and any input behind the scenes is always acknowledged. Facebook posts regularly praise team members who have delivered particular successes.

ISO9001 accreditation ensures all business processes are documented and clear - in the event of holiday or sickness cover, colleagues are able to follow robust processes in order to enable them to work effectively on projects. ISO9001 accreditation removes the burden on people to take potentially stressful responsibility in unfamiliar circumstances, providing clarity and structure. CPD and personal development are actively encouraged, with courses and related external qualifications (e.g. Chartered Institute of Marketing certification) funded by Onswitch when identified as a development need.

## **Q5. Control at Work: enabling staff to have a say in their work**

The open and collaborative (another of Onswitch's five values) flat business structure means that everyone feels comfortable to have his or her say. The managing director is in the office regularly and is a daily presence in every team member's day - she can always be contacted and encourages everyone to input his or her ideas. Informal meetings take place daily in the communal kitchen and regular team meetings at head office allow everyone to have their voice heard - problems don't build up or get swept away. Trainers also communicate regularly with each other and call on support from managers when required - following a difficult day of training when delegates were rather negative and obstructive, the Managing Director called the client personally the next day and improvements were immediately evident.

Team surveys collect Gallup 12 data - another is imminent but the last one a year ago returned excellent engagement scores for the Onswitch team.

## Q6. Communication at Work

The team leader system in place at Onswitch ensures that information is distilled down quickly and accurately to everyone.

Onswitch newsletters are distributed on an ad hoc basis, such as during times of change.

Onswitch produces a quarterly magazine, Footfall, which is distributed throughout the veterinary profession and all team members contribute news and updates.

Onswitch has two closed Facebook groups, one for the entire team and one for the trainers - people share news, thoughts and suggestions in this open forum and can see others being thanked and recognised.

Every member of the team receives a personal card and gift as thanks from the business's owners at key times of the year - an Easter Egg and a Christmas present at the team's festive lunchtime meal out.

## Q7. Health & Psychological Wellbeing

Onswitch prides itself on being a great place to work - the culture is supportive and management work hard to reward all team members in a number of ways:

- Generous salaries, commensurate with experience
- Excellent progression opportunities
- Plenty of time off - good annual holiday entitlement, Christmas shutdown of 7-8 days on average, time off in lieu and a day's holiday for birthdays
- Provision of diverse and interesting roles
- Free Perkbox membership for the team, providing discounts on a wide range of goods and services
- Bringing dogs to the office is encouraged

Team members say that they value the no-blame culture - if someone at any level makes a mistake, they admit it and share the learnings. There is no reprimanding or constant reminders.

No team members have ever taken long-term sick leave or needed time off to manage stress - proactive and pre-emptive support is given at an early stage when colleagues spot any signs of potential stress developing.