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**SMALL COMPANY NAMED 'RECOMMENDED EMPLOYER' BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS AWARDS**  
**by Deborah Robinson**

Wavelength International, an Australian medical recruitment and migration company with just 40 employees, has been named as a 'Recommended Employer' by the prestigious Australian Business Awards - proving that size doesn't matter when it comes to looking after the needs of company employees.

When asked to comment on the award, Director of Wavelength, Claire Ponsford (pictured) said, "Being named a Recommended Employer from the Australian Business Awards reinforces the professional and comfortable environment we have worked hard to achieve. Where appropriate, we approach our employees' needs on an individual basis to ensure we are providing each with the best work environment possible."

Organisations recognised with the Recommended Employer achievement must exhibit a stimulating and supportive workplace. Recipients of this award are required to demonstrate to the Australian Business Awards how its people development strategies have created a committed, motivated and effective workforce. The Australian Business Awards received 94 applications for this honour in 2008 but awarded only eight.

Wavelength International impressed the Australian Business Awards with their innovative approach to staff retention, job satisfaction and achieving work life balance by providing competitive salaries, family friendly work options, career development opportunities and incentive programs which includes company profit sharing.

Claire Ponsford said in a recent interview with Australian Women Online, "Not necessarily by design, but we are a company mainly of women and we offer flexible working hours. We also have a number of part-time workers who are mothers and who want to do a set number of hours per week."

"We also offer one day per week when people are able to work remotely (from home). We have a database system that is based on the Internet so people can login from wherever they are on that day."

In what is an unusual step for a small Australian company, Wavelength International also provides paid maternity leave. "Coming from the UK which offers paid maternity leave as standard, I was horrified when I came to Australia and discovered that paid maternity leave isn't accessible to everyone," said Claire.

"So one of the key things for me was offering paid maternity leave and it certainly has proven to work in our company. We currently have 3 staff members who are on maternity leave, one of whom is on her second stint of maternity leave. We know that these people will stay with us for the long term and that works for us because these women have so much knowledge and experience, it seems crazy to lose them."

Claire added, "We are very committed to giving people the flexibility to manage their home lives as well as their work lives. That means we have a team of very committed, very loyal staff because they know that we trust them - it's not about being seen to be present at your desk, it's about seeing results."

But job satisfaction isn't just about flexible working hours, it's also about enjoying what you do when you are at work. For many, the career development opportunities being offered by an employer are just as important as an attractive salary.

Claire Ponsford from Wavelength International says to retain staff, her company provides employees with challenging and interesting work, and opportunities for career advancement.

"We have always had a policy of really listening to what an employee wants to achieve and then doing whatever we can to make sure that they are able to achieve their professional goals within the company," said Claire.

Eighteen months ago, Wavelength International appointed a Talent and Human Resources Manager full-time to focus on recruitment, retention and training for staff. Since then the company has offered employees both internal training sessions and external training.

The company covers the full cost of one day courses, seminars and workshops, and pays half the cost of the six month migration agent course offered at universities. "We actually cover the full cost of the course up front and then the employees reimburse us half the cost through their salaries. After completion of this course, employees are able to obtain a migration agents license."

"We also have a number of para-consultants who support the medical recruitment consultants. If they demonstrate the ability to move up to the role of recruitment consultant, then we will do whatever we can to up-skill them. We currently have four recruitment consultants who started working for the company in a para-consultant role," said Claire.

Another strategy adopted by Wavelength International is a profit sharing scheme for employees who meet individual performance indicators.

Claire Ponsford explains, "Our profit sharing scheme is based on quarterly profit. Twenty per cent of the business profit goes into a pot that is then shared amongst the staff. Each staff member has their own set of key performance indicators that are linked to the company objectives."

"At the end of each quarter, each staff member is given a score based on their key performance indicators which determines how much of the profit they actually receive. For example, if everybody managed to get a hundred percent in their quarterly performance review, then every staff member would receive an equal share of the profit."

Unlike other company profit sharing schemes where the most senior members of staff receive the lion's share of the money, Wavelength International has structured their profit sharing scheme so that every member of staff, no matter what their position in the company, can receive an equal share.

"The tradition in recruitment companies is that the recruiters get all the glory and the commissions. We've found that the profit sharing scheme has really helped to motivate all our support and admin staff because they really feel that they're being rewarded for their hard work as well."

For more information about Wavelength International visit the website **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**