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Foreword

Thomas Edison would often show investors ideas and projects he had no real intention of working on.

That was because the thing he really needed the money for, often didn’t lend itself well to a simple explanation or to a mesmerising demonstration. Later, he would just switch the investor’s stake from the faux project to the real one.

You can make what you will of his ethics. But there’s something to be learned from Edison’s commitment to demonstration — even after his reputation was well-established.

We created the Journal of Internal Communication so that people from across the internal communication profession could demonstrate what they’re working on.

For instance, in this issue we hear from David Garfinkel from bwin.party, who shares his ‘hot seat’ concept – a wildly-successful internal interview series he created using tools built right into Microsoft Office.

We also meet Ezra Callahan – one of Facebook’s very first employees – who shares his stories from the firm’s early days. And Crossrail’s Richard Davies explains how the massive construction project brought together a disparate staff using something called “I was there” moments.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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Richard Davies, Crossrail’s employee engagement lead talks about the unique challenge of engaging an integrated team of people with nine different employers around a shared vision, mission and values.
Transfer Window: How Amey Engaged Its Rivals’ Employees When Contracts Switched

Amey’s Senior Internal Communications Manager Nathan Wallis talks about his experience delivering communications to employees who joined from 19 different organisations.

Amey is one of the largest and most diverse public services providers in the UK. One of our areas of expertise is facilities management (FM); where we provide services such as cleaning, catering, security, reception and energy management to a wide range of customers including the NHS, MoJ, schools and airports.

Last year, we won an innovative contract – where for the first time, three local councils came together to outsource FM services to a single external provider in order to reduce cost and protect frontline services. To make sure we hit the ground running, we had to get a new team and infrastructure in place within a six month mobilisation window. We also had to engage 600 new employees who would be joining Amey from 19 other organisations via TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment).

From an internal communication perspective, the challenge was twofold. There was a culture change to manage as our new employees were joining us from a range of different businesses, with many of them having worked for their existing employer for up to 40 years. Additionally, they didn’t become Amey employees until the go-live date, meaning that we had to engage with them while they were still working for a different employer – using communications channels we didn’t own.

Selling the benefits of joining Amey
One of our goals was to bring over a workforce that wanted to work for Amey and were motivated by what we stood for. We regularly referred to our company values and sold the benefits of working for Amey – including our Investors in People accreditation, award winning training and development resources, as well as our flexible benefits scheme. We also wanted to communicate our social value credentials including our community day programme which allows employees to have an additional day of holiday every year to work with a community group or charity of their choice.

Sharing communication channels
In order to reach this audience effectively, we needed to work in collaboration with our new client. I approached my counterparts
within the councils and suggested that we develop a combined communications plan which proved to be a very effective way of working. We identified what channels the councils had to reach their audiences (including their intranet, newsletters and information screens) and how Amey could utilise those to reach our new employees during the transfer period. Successfully doing so was mutually beneficial so everyone bought into the plan.

In addition to our client’s channels, we developed a suite of new, bespoke materials for this project such as a mobilisation newsletter and a detailed welcome pack. We supplemented these materials with pre-recorded audio messages which could be listened to at a time to suit the team member and helped reach the employees who worked mainly offline and antisocial hours.

The audio calls took into account the different working patterns of these teams and the fact that as a multi-lingual population, they might not be able to read English as well as our online employees.

**Leveraging face-to-face communication**

Due to the nature of Amey's work, many or our employees don’t have access to the internet during their shift so aren’t easily accessible through online channels. This project was no different; so we had to rely on traditional communication methods to engage with them.

Working closely with Amey’s HR team, as well as those from the 19 existing employers, we held regular face-to-face meetings to discuss their transfer into Amey. We also worked closely with the unions to deliver these messages which supported a smooth transition into Amey.

Face-to-face communication was an excellent way of capturing feedback on the process which helped us to continually improve our messages throughout the mobilisation.
After the ‘go live’

Once the contract went live and we had given every new member of the team an induction, we made sure there was a structured communication programme in place. We have regular, corporate communications such as our monthly newsletter and employee magazine, as well as collaboration tools such as Yammer and Microsoft Lync. We appointed a local communication manager and have “employee champions” who work with the team to gather and share good news, as well as encourage the use of our community days.

I feel strongly that embedding good communication starts with your manager population. We talked to our new managers about what role they could play in delivering effective internal communications to a diverse, offline workforce and also ensured they knew what support was available from Amey’s corporate communications team.

Measuring success

A few months after the go-live, our company-wide engagement survey showed a general satisfaction score of 94% with this group, significantly above the Amey average of 80%, indicating we had succeeded in engaging the new team.

One of the lessons I learned from this project was the value of communicating with people as early as possible. This can prove challenging as a communicator when you’re still in the process of defining the solution; but even communicating that there is no news can serve to put people at ease and increase engagement from your most vital asset: your employees.

Biography

Nathan Wallis

Nathan has worked for Amey for over three years where he has delivered both internal and external communications. He began his career in media relations, working for one of the UK’s largest banks and has public sector experience from his time at the Highways Agency. A father of two, he enjoys watching live music and going to the cinema.

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When it comes to crisis management, nothing is more important than preparation. With a combination of internal communication and crisis management experience, Helen McLeod talks us through some critical steps to take following a crisis.

Over my career, I’ve had a lot of experience in dealing with crisis communications. My biggest piece of advice for having a successful crisis communications strategy would be to be proactive and have strong processes in place in order to allow for a swift response when a crisis occurs. Here are a few actions I would recommend taking to ensure you’re prepared for any possible scenario.

**Working as a joint Corporate Affairs function**

When a crisis occurs, external communications always take precedence over internal comms – that’s where the story leads from. Colleagues and customers are confronted with external media, so naturally the PR team tends to lead communications. However, working with them as a joint Corporate Affairs function will ensure that internal messages are aligned to the external world, which often moves very rapidly. Most importantly, it will enable you to have a seat at the table, have access to leaders and be involved in the messaging development, as opposed to just getting a final version that might not be suitable for your audiences.

So you need to establish strong relationships with the PR team beforehand to ensure that...
if anything comes up, you will work very closely with them, tailoring and filtering their messages to inform colleagues – primarily customer-facing colleagues – and help them deal with customers.

**Implementing strong processes**
It’s essential to have a process of governance to ensure rapid approval. In a crisis situation, you have to keep that list to a minimum because things need to be turned around in a matter of hours rather than days. So it’s best to know in advance who you would need to talk to – typically the CEO, the Legal Department as well as a leader in charge of frontline staff.

You also need to have some kind of emergency-type plan to ensure the message gets cascaded out across the organisation quickly – within a day rather than the normal five to ten days’ delivery. Methods would vary depending on how your business operates but you may have a central site where customer talking points are published and updated continuously. Leaders should be equipped with material to talk their teams through the situation in face-to-face sessions, listening to colleagues and responding to any concerns.

One last thing to think about is how frontline staff will feed customers’ questions and reactions back to the central team. When you’re in the thick of things, the business team should work as a central mechanism to monitor what customers are concerned about. Particularly for customer focused businesses, you need to know how many people have called in about the crisis and what they have asked – and then make appropriate FAQs available to your teams.

**Keeping a fast pace**
Internal communication will always be a bit behind external messages. However, you should release an initial communication if anything comes up, you will work very closely with them, tailoring and filtering their messages to inform colleagues – primarily customer-facing colleagues – and help them deal with customers.

It’s important to instil confidence back into employees by communicating the clear steps in place for any similar circumstances. You should demonstrate control, confidence and clarity to highlight that you have the right people in place to take the business forward."
shortly after the crisis hits – which could be quite factual and non-committal. The difficulty at this stage is to react while the information might not be fully available; there might be speculation, accusations, but not necessarily fully presented facts. So you need to find a balance and keep a neutral position whilst equipping frontline staff with some talking points to face customers.

Then a few days later, you might release a statement from the CEO acknowledging the impact that the situation has on colleagues. Something like, “I’m disappointed, and I’m sorry that colleagues have been put in that situation”. Quite quickly, you will need a message that clarifies the company’s position. Importantly, your message should be impartial and as transparent as possible as the story is still evolving. It’s important to make employees feel involved. It shouldn’t look to them like the company is only responding to what’s being said externally.

Instead, internal communication should give them information where it’s appropriate. As far as possible, you want to take the lead rather than having the media driving the story.

Post crisis
After you’ve made it through the immediate crisis period, one of the important things is to thank people for what they’ve done, acknowledge the personal impact and focus on what the future will look like after the crisis – rather than looking at the debris and dwelling on the situation.

It’s important to instil confidence back into employees by communicating the clear steps in place for any similar circumstances. You should demonstrate control, confidence and clarity and highlight that you have the right people in place to take the business forward.

I would recommend doing a post-implementation review with all the people involved. This should review what worked well – whether the right channels were in place, were they fit for purpose as well as what could be done better – like a crisis play book.

Helen McLeod is a freelance communication and change consultant. Her previous assignments include Communication Business Partner for the Co-operative Bank. She has over ten years experience in internal communication and crisis management. Prior to that, she has worked at HBOS and Lloyds. Her experience includes leadership roles across IT, customer-facing, e-commerce and strategy teams.

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The Journal of Internal Communication
Driving the Strategy at Avis Budget

When Avis Budget rolled its European franchises into one global entity, it fell to Simon Robinson to get employees into gear.

When I joined Avis Budget Group in 2012 as the Communications Director for EMEA, it was the first time the business had had anybody responsible for internal communication. Just to give you some background, Avis and Budget had previously been run as franchises in Europe. But in 2011, Avis Budget Group bought them out and integrated them into the global organisation. That was quite a shock to the system, because until then each country had more or less run its own show.

The organisation had developed a new strategy to move the franchisees into the corporate structure – so when I came on board one of my first jobs was to connect all of our employees to that new strategy.

We have about 6,500 people across Europe and they range from front-line people who are in our stations – where you go to rent your car from – to people in our back office, shared service centers or head office functions. But the majority are operational front line people.

When I joined, the business had just done its first employee survey as a part of the re-organisation, and the top thing everyone wanted to see improved was communication. So quite a challenge!

This audience is the age-old ‘hard to reach’ front-line employee. They don’t all have email addresses. They’re not sat at a computer. They might have a standalone computer maybe in the office area or access to their manager’s laptop,

“They actually printed a copy of the strategy on the side of a van and the senior team took it in turns to drive it around.”
We went down the route of using Prezi rather than PowerPoint to make it a bit more interactive and have that sort of ‘sit up and take notice’ factor. Prezi worked well – not everybody likes it because they can find the movement hard to follow – but it’s visual, rather than being a series of words.

Plus, it doesn’t allow anyone who’s presenting it just to stand there and point at PowerPoint slides. It took away that safety blanket, and got people being much more passionate about it and allowed them to build stories into it. I’m passionate about storytelling and this approach provided a great platform for leaders to tell stories.

Different countries took different approaches. In one of our countries, they actually printed a copy of the strategy on the side of a van and the senior team took it in turns to drive it around all the different stations. They’d take people outside and walk them through the strategy on the side of the van. We did remove the Avis Budget

but they would rarely go on the computer and look at that information.

My main challenge was connecting employees to the strategy. That was something that we had to get in place. Connecting the strategy was difficult, given the diverse audience and the fact that we didn’t have sophisticated channels to use. So a lot of the work went into thinking about how we could make it not only interesting, but also easily understandable for all of our employees.

We wanted to create a ‘plan on a page’ – a strong visual that people could refer to. So if a manager was taking an employee through the strategy, they could use the visual to explain it. In some organisations I’ve seen, a strategy is a 100 page document in font size seven – full of numbers and complicated words. But our goal was: “Let’s get a diagram on a page with some key phrases”. It was quite simple in its language and quite pictorial. We rolled it out using face-to-face town halls and road shows, using our EMEA president as a figurehead.

The Journal of Internal Communication
branding, so our competitors wouldn’t see us driving around with our strategy on the side of the van! That worked really well and it got the senior leaders out in the business, which was some of the feedback from the Engagement Survey, lack of visibility, which was something else I was trying to tackle.

What we wanted to get happening was managers starting to have conversations with their people about it. So, I developed a monthly PDF that they could use with them. It was almost a set of instructions on how to run a successful team meeting and how they might talk about it – what sort of questions they could ask.

I knew there were differing levels of abilities in the management population, and some people needed that support – so this was their safety blanket when they spoke with their teams.

I carried out some in-depth pulse check research and found that 72% of people had had a briefing on the strategy – which was really pleasing. And even better, only 13% were unable to name one of the strategic goals, which compared to some of the figures in other companies I’ve worked at, was a huge achievement. In the past, I’ve seen cases where over 40% couldn’t name even one of the strategic goals of the organisation. And when we repeated our annual engagement survey, communication showed the largest positive increase of any question across the whole of the company.

We’re now starting to see clear sign-posting where anything we do relates back to the strategy. People can say: “Oh I see why we’re doing this – it’s helping to drive that part of the strategy.”

The business had just done its first employee survey as a part of the re-organisation, and the top thing everyone wanted to see improved was communication.

Simon Robinson

Simon is EMEA Communication Director for Avis Budget Group. He has led both internal and external communications for a number of large organisations including Nationwide, Fortis and Siemens. He is passionate about storytelling and hones his skills on his most demanding audience – his three young children.

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Communicating technological change at City of London Corporation

How fundamental is internal communication in the world of technology? Christine Brown, Head of Strategy, Research and Intelligence explains how her IC background proved invaluable in her move into ICT.

When asked to write an article for this journal, I wondered whether my contribution would be still valid and interesting, having recently made the leap from ‘pure’ internal communications into the technology discipline. Would ‘comms’ still be a key aspect of my working day? After seven years of working in IC across the broadcasting, government and financial sector, I took a leap of faith and accepted an exciting new role in the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) team – Head of Strategy, Research and Intelligence – with my current employer the City of London Corporation. I assumed that my comms background would serve as a useful but complementary skill but in fact, it has become a fundamental aspect of the role.

City of London Corporation has a special role and a remit that goes beyond that of an ordinary local authority. We look after the City of London on behalf of all who live, work and visit the ‘Square Mile’ but in addition, the Corporation supports and promotes the City as the world leader in international finance and business. It also has a charitable arm via the City Bridge Trust, and provides a range of other services to London
The tools of IC are valuable but are only part of the story. Internal communication is about the behaviour we experience on a daily basis from colleagues and leaders and success comes from feeling informed, trusted, led and empowered.

and the nation including the Barbican Centre, five Thames Bridges including Tower Bridge and Millennium Bridge, the Old Bailey, not to mention various open spaces such as Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest. Including the City of London Police, we have nearly 4,000 staff that range from but aren’t limited to: teachers, social workers, city planners, lawyers and police to archivists and gardeners.

My new role sits within a newly created in-house change and technology team. The City Corporation technology division has undergone significant change in 2013. We entered into partnership with Agilisys as our IT provider and restructured the in-house technology team with a clear vision: to create an in-house team of customer-focused and innovative ‘change’ – rather than simply ‘technology’ – experts that can facilitate business improvement through technological change in the organisation.

My new remit is challenging and varies from managing and developing up to 10 business analysts – to policy research and refresh – to managing both business as usual and change communication across a range of activities and projects. A huge part of change delivery is communication in which I am responsible for:

- communicating to the organisation our ICT/change strategy and ensuring our team share this
- communicating the business benefits and changes across a range of change programmes
- communicating policy and good practice in relation to storing and sharing data for example.

The aspiration is for our team to become trusted advisors in the organisation with respect to technological change and wider change processes. That requires the language of technology to be humanised and made accessible, sending the clear message that technology is only part of the organisational change story.

The challenges of the role are many and varied: a rapidly changing technological
landscape, managing expectations of customers who want the same quality of user experience and ease of system use as they have at home, to encouraging changes in mindset and behaviour within the organisation to realise business benefits. After detailed research into business requirements and wider reference to government aspiration through the Digital by Default strategy, we are driving organisational change through four strategic work programmes: Better Working Practices, Customer Access and Service, Building an Effective Organisation and Promoting the City. One of my communication remits is to work with a project team tasked with moving financial and property data to a new system in a bid to improve data quality thus providing key business intelligence. This doesn’t just require behaviour change through the development of new processes, but an actual change to attitude in order to ensure staff understand their responsibility and the value they bring to making the process work. Business intelligence (BI) is only as good as the data provided by staff. As a strategy to help embed this culture, we are embarking on a series of staff sessions around the organisation to communicate the wider significance of BI and what it means for the organisation and for individuals. There are similar collective intelligence challenges too – driving adoption of internal collaborative and social platforms to share knowledge and resources for example. So by far, the biggest challenge is culture change – a familiar experience for many who work in employee communications.

Over the next year, my role is not only to ensure that our policies and practices are built upon sound intelligence and informed decisions but to ensure our colleagues and customers hear about our plans and understand their role in the process. This can range from engagement activity such as workshop participation to drive user engagement in system development for example, to compliance in the processes that relate to successful system adoption. What has been particularly interesting about this role to date has been my return – in part – to being the ‘customer’ of corporate internal communications, but here, my view remains unchanged. The tools of IC are valuable but are only part of the story. Internal communication is about the behaviour we experience on a daily basis from colleagues and leaders and success comes from feeling informed, trusted, led and empowered.

Christine Brown has worked as Head of Internal Communications at City of London Corporation for over four years. More recently, she has taken on a lead role in Strategy, Research and Intelligence. Over her career, she has gained a track record in employee / internal communications, change communications and corporate communications spanning across the broadcasting, production, civil service, local government and financial sectors. Her large catalogue of specialisms include digital engagement and transformation, organisational development and communications strategy and delivery.

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The elements of engagement

You might be asking yourself how do we target disengaged employees? What impact might this have on the business? Gatehouse Programme Director, Chris Atkinson, explores the elements of employee engagement and reveals one sustainable competitive advantage that may be the answer to your questions.

Culturally in the UK, many organisations lack life. Many of your people are actively disengaged because they find work boring, obvious, unchallenging or delivering no tangible benefit. Your people and culture represent the only unique advantage over your competition. The truth is, to keep our people inspired, we need to deliver and work in more engaging and creative ways.

The concept of engagement

The business world has had many ‘buzzwords’ over the years. Concepts like empowerment, wellness or proactivity and many others have become a form of management slang that has mostly lost any practical meaning. Many companies still regularly talk about these concepts, but sadly very few people have a real sense of what behaviours or skills are needed to support them.

With this in mind, it would be understandable if the huge growth of interest in the word and concept of ‘engagement’ was to be met with some scepticism. Is this just the latest in a string of words that will fall into our management vocabulary fated to lose any real meaning in years to come?

In short, absolutely not!

Engagement as a concept is noticeably different to historical buzzword terms, largely because of the incredible research that has been done to support the idea. Take a moment to consider the size and scale of the following studies:

Gallup 2013: Employee Engagement Drives Growth.

Gallup’s most recent meta-analysis on employee engagement accumulated 263 research studies across 192 organisations in 49 industries and 34 countries. In total, Gallup studied 49,928 business/work units including 1,390,941 employees.

Organisations with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every
likely the training industry will also see the growth of programmes aimed at enhancing employee engagement. This inspires some thought-provoking questions:

- How do we target the disengaged?
- Can we pre-empt the issue with more effective induction sessions?
- Can ‘training’ really even affect this issue? What courses are available?

Instead of these questions, let’s consider these far more relevant alternatives for a moment:

- Where and when does engagement happen?
- What courses are available?

**Our businesses need to focus on simple development for managers, leaders and trainers. We need to teach them how to truly energise and enthuse people through their communication.**

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**Gallup 2008: Employee Engagement**
Study of data collected from more than 5.4 million employees representing 620,000 workgroups in 16 major industries and more than 70 sub-industries in 137 countries worldwide.

Engaged organisations have 2.6 times the earnings per share (EPS) growth rate compared to organisations with lower engagement in their same industry. The ratio of engaged to disengaged in “World Class” companies 8:1, “Average” companies 1.5:1

It follows that as you read this a further barrage of new psychometrics are being developed to test for ‘engagement’ levels. Doubtless staff engagement surveys are being redesigned and rewritten. Most actively disengaged employee in 2010-2011 experienced 147% higher earnings per share (EPS) compared with their competition in 2011-2012.

**Aon Hewitt 2011: Trends in Global Engagement**
Engagement research from 2008 to 2010 includes 6.7 million employees and represents more than 2,900 organisations.

Organisations with high levels of engagement (85% or greater) continue to outperform the total stock market index and posted total shareholder returns 22% higher than the average in 2010. On the other hand, companies with low engagement (45% or less) had a total shareholder return that was 28% lower than the average.

Doubtless staff engagement surveys are being redesigned and rewritten. Most actively disengaged employee in 2010-2011 experienced 147% higher earnings per share (EPS) compared with their competition in 2011-2012.
Who is responsible for creating employee engagement?

The fundamental element

The truth is, ‘where it happens’ is everywhere and everyday. Ultimately, ‘engagement’ is something that characterises the relationship between an employee and their organisation. Far from the commonplace assumption that therefore engagement is an organisational and cultural issue (i.e. high level and strategic), actually the truth is far simpler and more profound. The fact is that the responsibility for creating engagement must lie firstly with the day-to-day leadership and management that employees experience. Those people who make requests, assign workload, define roles and responsibilities; the individuals who stand in front of your people and give direction, training or guidance.

Challenge yourself to consider how effective your managers are at communicating and creating desire, enthusiasm and energy in people to deliver results? Instead of a focus on training for front-line employees or engagement strategies, our businesses need to focus on simple development for managers, leaders and trainers. We need to teach them how to truly energise and enthuse people through their communication. It is their responsibility; in fact, it always has been, long before the concept of employee engagement was ever coined.

Biography \ Chris Atkinson

Chris Atkinson leads Gatehouse’s Elements of Engagement development programme for line managers and leaders. An experienced international trainer, he specialises in employee engagement, organisational culture and inspiring leadership. Qualifying for Dale Carnegie in 2001 he became their youngest trainer in the organisation and is now ranked in the top 5% of trainers in the UK and top 15% worldwide. Recently, Chris has spoken at events worldwide and has worked closely with a number of leadership organisations including Lloyds Banking Group, General Motors and Adidas.

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Are employee magazines dead?
Here’s why print isn’t past it

Rachel Ifans makes the case for print-based magazines – arguing that after years of decline, paper is making a come-back...

Unless you’ve been living in a cave for the past ten years, you will have heard the doomsayers and seen the facts. Recent years have proved deathly for magazine and newspaper circulation figures and we’ve all been told that digital is the only way to go – but is print really dead?

It seems that in some areas print lives on and is even showing signs of growth. Some magazines are seeing a resurgence in popularity in the wider world and I believe that the reasons for this pocketed growth are the same reasons why you should put print at the forefront of your internal communications strategy.

Print is back – 10 reasons why

1. It stands out from the digital crowd
   Many periodicals have closed their costly print versions in favour of a digital replacement and the same has happened in internal communications – print has fallen off the agenda making way for email, intranets, video and social comms. But consider this… a less crowded marketplace enables the best to shine through.
   A well-placed piece of print comms will get noticed and make an impact.

2. It is more engaging
   Print is king for engaging the reader’s full attention. Here’s something we all...
20

3. It is exceptionally edited
In a world where we’re being forced to sort the wheat from the chaff ourselves due to the plethora of information available to us, a print product is wonderfully constrained by its physicality. It can’t go on indefinitely (unlike a web article), its author has earned a right to be there, it has been through rigorous commissioning, writing, proofing and editing processes – and has made it to print in this ‘perfect’ state. It has been created with its reader in mind. You are special.

4. It is designed to perfection
Professionals who are experienced and skilled in their trade design print products. They know how to draw in a reader with a headline or a caption. They know which picture will interest you most. They fiddle with typeface and point size until dawn. Colour palettes, illustrations, page furniture and white space are honed to perfection. They know what you want to read and see. Something in print is a special thing.

5. It is practical
The printed publication is infinitely readable, transportable, rollable and foldable. Yes, it’s costly. Yes, it has long production lead times. But it works.

As I read recently by Eric Jensen, Editor of recently launched The Saturday Paper: “Nothing has effectively replaced the beauty of holding a paper at the weekend, or of reading a long story in one. When it comes to forming habits, nothing competes with the predictability of a print cycle and the physical act of turning pages. Even in their weakened state, stories in newspapers have greater impact than stories that appear only online.”

6. It lasts
Teams on hobbyist mags have known this for years. Not only do readers await the new issue with bated breath, they also store up dozens of old issues on a sacred shelf to refer back to. In contrast to the total and relentless transience of the digital world, the messages in a print production are here to stay. They know – people still find it harder to read on screen. Those who do read on screen tend to scan content and stop reading earlier. If you have an important message to get across, relying on digital alone is foolish.
exist – they are in print. So whether you’re communicating essential business change, restructuring, company vision, employee awards, or how-to documents, get it down on paper.

7. **It is the best medium for long-form journalism**
   How many words can you read on a computer screen before you start drifting off or your eyes start burning from the inside out? Even though we know it’s bad to print out what you’re reading, let’s face it: it’s a labour of love to read long-form text on anything apart from paper. Think of your reader and put your meaty comms in print.

8. **It carries more weight**
   “There is something about having that large expanse of real estate in your lap, something about the [print] format, that is extremely satisfying,” says Kevin Kelly, founding executive editor of Wired and recent self-publisher of Cool Tools, a print title that has outsold all expectations. “Having many different things you may be interested in on a page, as opposed to a single thing surrounded by ads as it is on the web, leads to the formation of different connections and leads to a different experience,” he told the New York Times recently.

9. **It is better for opinion**
   Here’s something we all strive for in internal communications: authority. And there is something about print that gives your communication a sense of legitimacy. Is it the money spent, the time it has taken to create, the fact it exists in a very physical sense? Whatever, your important messages and your opinions will gain credence from print.

10. **Wow factor**
    It begs to be touched and loved. The paper feels gorgeous and the text could have been written only for you. A feeling of belonging that can be powerful and effective when communicating with employees comes from a high-quality piece of print publishing.

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Where magazines are growing in the wider world is with premium, possibly less frequent products. Here’s an extract I read recently in The Observer by John O’Reilly:

“A visit to any of the larger bookshops – Foyle’s in London, or independent shops such as Colours May Vary in Leeds, Material in east London – will reveal an array of beautifully constructed print objects. Magazines such as Article, Kinfolk and the Green Soccer Journal have production, design and editorial philosophies that re-imagine our experience of magazines.”

Make your print products beautiful, aspirational, satisfying and edited. Invest in them but make them irregular and special. Employees will appreciate the ‘club’ they belong to, and congratulate themselves for being a part of it.

Rachel Ifans is a very experienced print and digital journalist, magazine editor and internal communications manager. She has recently started her own company which specialises in creative communications and is currently working for Travis Perkins Plc, Sawday’s and some smaller organisations and charities. Please contact her on rachel@wearetwist.net for consultancy and project work, however large or small.
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Engaging employees in defining the company spirit with Instagram

How do you get employees to help you define the company spirit in a large and geographically divided company? And how do you communicate it in an inspiring and relevant way? In cooperation with Danish agency Open, IT company NNIT tackled this using Instagram in an innovative internal campaign.

NNIT wanted to define and create an experience of ‘one company’ among 2,200 employees in eight countries, after a survey found that most employees didn’t understand the ‘one company’ proposition. Working with Senior Communication Specialist Kristin Staveli Pettersen from the Copenhagen-based agency Open, NNIT tackled the issue by launching a large-scale internal campaign – using Instagram as the primary channel for participation.

Engaging the employees
“We wanted to do something that truly involved employees. Something that went beyond just understanding top management’s definition of ‘one company’. We wanted...
employees to define and share their own interpretation. In the end, that’s what truly created a strong and meaningful result,” NNIT Senior Communication Consultant Anne Pia Bjerg Overbeck explains.

With top management buy-in, NNIT invited all employees to take and share photos of the “NNIT spirit” on Instagram using the hashtag #onennit. This type of campaign was a first in NNIT, and the communication team were very pleased with a result that exceeded all expectations: 480 photos were shared and 355 people followed NNIT’s Instagram profile. Employees from all NNIT’s affiliates participated, especially the Asian employees, who were eager to participate.

The Communication department is now considering launching another campaign using Instagram and is also considering how to use the material from an employer branding perspective. The question is why did using Instagram work so well in the NNIT campaign? And what should internal communicators consider when using an external channel internally?

**Instagram: pros and cons**

Employees increasingly expect IC channels to match the experience of channels used outside the office. In this light, using Instagram was a clever move that made it possible for NNIT to meet employees’ expectations of usability and interactivity in a low-cost manner. At the same time, using visual communication helped break down linguistic barriers, allowing employees to communicate across borders and on equal terms.

“One of the reasons for the campaign’s success was the fact that the employees communicated via photos and therefore were able to speak the same visual language. It made it easy to participate, across borders, languages and cultures. Seeing your colleagues’ everyday work life from across the world creates a sense of togetherness and pride. Together with a strong campaign across all internal platforms, and with visible top-management support, was some of the reasons for the success” Kristin Staveli Pettersen from Open says.

Opening the doors to the inside of your organisation, as NNIT did with this campaign, can be a great way of bringing your employees closer together and offering...
mobile devices currently lack compared to computers. It is important to include the IT department when planning a campaign using an external channel and to remind employees of their non-disclosure agreements – as NNIT did prior to the campaign.

In NNIT, using Instagram meant asking employees to use their private accounts when engaging with the campaign, making all photos posted with the #onennit hashtag visible for everyone in the employees’ networks on Instagram. A significant reason for the NNIT campaign’s success was therefore the employees’ willingness to associate their personal online identities with NNIT’s brand – something that can only be achieved if employees are generally happy with their job and proud of their workplace and want to show it to their network. This proved to have a valuable and unexpected positive effect for NNIT, namely as an employer branding activity.

Therefore, before launching an internal campaign on Instagram, it is important to consider how to handle criticism or negative feedback. If the corporate climate and the employees are under pressure, then it might not be the right time to launch a culture campaign, expecting to receive entirely positive contributions from the employees.

Blurred lines between personal and work life
Using an external channel in IC will often require employees to use their private devices and accounts, resulting in the lines between their professional and private information becoming blurry. This makes security a vital issue in the organisation, both in terms of what information is shared by employees, and also in terms of the safeguards that

the outside world a peek on the inside. This being said, it also opens up for those who might have a critical view on your company, both employees as well as people outside the organisation.

www.gatehousegroup.co.uk/Joic
“Beside the campaign’s success in engaging employees, we realised that the material had great potential from an employer branding perspective. This is very valuable because NNIT is growing rapidly and needs to attract more and more people internationally. The #onennit photos showed a picture of an innovative company where people are passionate about what they do – a place where you really want to work. With so many positive photos posted, the employees proved to be great ambassadors for NNIT,” Anne Pia Bjerg Overbeck says.

A blend of courage with a dash of good planning
One of the key learnings from NNIT’s campaign is that incorporating an external channel in an internal strategy campaign requires a strong brand and a confident organisation willing to take risks. But of course, a successful campaign requires more than just courage and the right choice of channel. At NNIT, the mix of channels, the exposure of the campaign and the close collaboration between communication units were the main reasons for campaign success. An element of competition, where employees could win prizes every week, also played a significant role in catalysing the employees’ engagement.

“Besides Instagram, the #onennit campaign had a site on the intranet where all photos were collected. Here, employees who were not engaged in social media could follow and contribute to the campaign as well. All employees could win prizes when participating in the campaign and the campaign was heavily promoted both online and offline through flyers, full-size billboards, ambassadors and videos. One of the videos showed the CEO taking the first ‘selfie’ for Instagram and explaining why the campaign was important for NNIT. But the key factor in creating buy-in among the employees was massive communication through all available internal channels, incentives and the focus on why the One NNIT Spirit matters,” concludes Overbeck.

When the campaign ended, NNIT launched a film that summed up the many different messages from the photos and explained how the employees’ efforts collectively defined the One NNIT Spirit. Furthermore, all the best photos from Instagram were made into posters for an internal display of One NNIT Spirit.

Biography \ Kristin Stavel Pettersen

Kristin Stavel Pettersen is Senior Communication Specialist in the communication Copenhagen-based agency Open. Open is a leading agency specialising in internal corporate communication, including strategy execution and employee engagement. Together with the rest of the Open team, Kristin helps clients develop internal change campaigns and communicate strategic themes across organisations. The agency’s approach is based on visual concepts that create relevance, dialogue, and involvement at all levels of the organisation.

www.weareopen.dk
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How to make leaders more visible by putting them in the ‘hot seat’

David Garfinkel explains how global online gaming giant bwin.party put leaders in front of employees.

In 2012, we carried out an audit across the recently-merged bwin.party Group to see how the new business was performing from a communication perspective. It showed, among other things, that we needed to improve leadership visibility. As we’re a global business with operations in four continents, that’s not as easy as it sounds.

As a fast-paced online business, we decided that a live and snappy interactive channel would best suit our culture and increasingly agile environment. We also wanted the ability to record the sessions so we could offer a catch-up service on the intranet for those unable to attend. Most importantly, it had to be flexible, easy to use and cost-effective.

Professional webcasting services are expensive and lacked the degree of interactivity that we were looking for. Plus, a lot of our leaders are constantly travelling, so pinning them down to a set time and place where an external provider could come in and film them just wasn’t practical.

After failing to find an external service that met our requirements, we discovered we already had our own in-house resource that could do just the trick – a bolt-on to Microsoft Office called Lync. It is an instant messaging tool that also allows audio/video chat with anybody in the company. We knew the majority of our people had access to the tool, and so the idea of the ‘Hot Seat’ was born.

The structure is very simple: once a month we invite a different senior leader to the Hot Seat – we try and ensure it is as topical and current as possible so that we address issues that our people are interested in talking about. The presenter simply sits in front of their laptop webcam and gives a brief update about their area, projects or performance. We advise people to give a relatively short, punchy talk – no more than five minutes. The rest of the 30-minute session is open to Q&A. People type in their questions via the chat facility and the presenter answers them in the order that they arrive – it’s very simple.
It’s also a very transparent channel. There’s no anonymity – everybody uses their real name – but that’s never stopped people from voicing what we consider to be quite challenging questions! The whole purpose of these sessions is to increase the visibility of the senior team and allow all employees to ask questions – our people certainly haven’t held back.

To promote the Hot Seat we send out a single Group-wide calendar invite with a link to the session – and it is very much first-come, first served. Such is the growing popularity of Hot Seat we are getting close to hitting the maximum number of ‘lines’ that can join (250). And to expand the accessibility of Hot Seat we have also encouraged groups of people to join from meeting rooms or even the canteen in one place!

All the sessions are recorded, and this is then uploaded to the intranet within 24 hours. We add some intro music and titles using video editing software and, while not of studio-quality, we find that a ‘rough and ready’ approach is more than adequate for what we are trying to achieve.

Currently, around one in three people in the business watch a Hot Seat either live or via the intranet and as a result we are gradually improving leadership visibility and access, with an emphasis on real-time, face-to-face communication. Another benefit is that as everything is done in-house, we don’t have to spend a penny from the communications budget.

Someone recently said to me that they had a new person joining their team and they wanted to bring them up to speed on the company. So they said: “Go to the intranet, go to the Hot Seat archive and watch all the videos.” It’s really satisfying to know the channel has that kind of resonance.

As a function we’re also trying to drive employee engagement in a number of different ways. Focusing on the ‘employee voice’ is key to that approach. Over the last
year we also developed a discussion forum called Chatterbox. It has been developed in-house using a white label product – and this is where working for a tech-orientated business really pays off.

The forums can be accessed in multiple places from the intranet, but importantly we have a highlight tool on the homepage of the site that gives you a real-time view of the latest posts.

It’s been really interesting seeing how people have taken to it. On a daily basis around 20% of the people who have access to the intranet now have the discussion forums open. The number of views per month has increased from 14,000 since the launch in January to more than 26,000 in March – and that’s without any hard promotion.

As well as creating a sense of community, and helping share knowledge, we have also seen a corresponding increase in lead story views as the forums do draw people in – and that can only help when it comes to message penetration. And as people can also promote activities and events without having to come through Group Communications, it is a highly empowering tool – and speeds up the overall communication process.

Structuring such a tool is important. We set up categories for the launch to focus the chats and ensure people can find what they need easily. Plus, it’s not anonymous. As it’s linked to your intranet profile, you cannot post without your name appearing – and a profile picture if you have one uploaded. We felt that was really important in terms of trying to establish a more open, transparent culture. We want people to feel it is ok to speak up and have an opinion.

It’s still early days, but so far it’s proving to be a popular tool – as much for those who want to improve a customer-facing feature or internal process, as those who want to sell an unwanted item or get sponsorship for a charitable activity!
Rom Shibi explains how he uses entertainment and gamification to communicate strategy to employees going through a period of change.

Two years ago, a large Israeli industrial company went through a massive change. The strategy was changed, new markets were entered, the organisation’s structure was revised and last but not least, operating and managerial reporting were all modified. In order to support the change, a few half-day summits were held with all mid-level managers where the strategy was rigorously explained, new practices were taught and senior management believed that was that.

After two years, it was clear that the processes had not been embedded and the change had not been baked in.

We found a number of issues that middle management had to deal with:

- All changes were implemented without any consultation with middle management – and followed a long period of low performance. Therefore the change began in an atmosphere of resentment and insecurity amid rumours of the company being bought.

- Even after the meetings with middle management, there was no follow up to make sure messages and strategy were actually understood and the mood that senior management set was: “Get things done first, ask questions later.”

- Nobody stressed to middle management the need to engage employees at a grassroots level; they were considered by senior management as simply blue collar workers, without much to contribute to the process.

As most of our employees were not online, we wanted a simple strategy that would tackle the issue and engage both online and offline employees. We therefore...

The Journal of Internal Communication
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We made sure the game was visible throughout the organisation. The idea was to navigate through the corporate seas, making decisions, while privy to a whole lot of strategy and marketing data. This was to help employees understand the rationale behind management decisions.

Here are a few lessons we learned:

1. **Being clear about the purpose of the game**
   At the beginning, different internal stakeholders will pull you in all directions. Everyone thinks they should influence the game, which will affect the way employees understand the company strategy. Make sure you stick to the mandate senior management give
you. Ours was: “employees need to understand the global market challenges and why we’re making these specific moves”. The game mechanics were simple and were meant to make the new strategy a natural extension of everyday work.

2. Make the game alive
There is a big difference between having a game in the company and gamification. Gamification, when done right, can become a water-cooler subject of conversation and not one to be trifled with. In order for it to become a compelling experience that becomes an employee motivator, it’s not enough for it to exist on the intranet. It needs to be on the walls, it needs to be on the napkins in the dining hall. It needs to be visible from the entrance to the parking lot. It needs to be mentioned in the team meetings so it becomes the talk of the company.

3. Refresh, reward and resonate
New material was put in every couple of days – questions, general information, trivia, recent market headlines and more were all used to engage and give the game a feeling of interactivity.

Intrinsic rewards were used so that engagement would be high and indeed, they were popular, especially with particular departments that don’t often meet with such opportunity.

4. Measure
It’s all for naught if you fail to measure. Firstly, management will want to see figures in order to see whether this gamification “thing” is worthwhile or not. More importantly, you will be able to adjust your game online, according to participation figures. You’ll know if everyone got a whiff of the game if members from every department participate. Measurement allowed us to know when a subject had to be changed and a new one had to be entered.

Rom Shibi is CEO of Northern Exposure. You can reach him on LinkedIn.
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The Journal of Internal Communication
Ezra Callahan joined Facebook as one of its first employees and went on to head up internal communication. He explains how face-to-face channels kept the culture thriving at the world’s largest social network.

I joined Facebook as its sixth employee through an old roommate. I was its first product manager, and as the company grew I evolved from product management to internal communications.

Facebook very quickly had satellite offices outside of headquarters in Palo Alto, and through my role within product management, I was essentially doing internal communications simply to keep the company up-to-speed with what was going on. Once we had 1,000 employees, keeping everyone in the loop and fostering the same culture required a lot of effort and a considerable number of internal tools and programmes.

As Facebook grew its offices internationally, a big reason why people were dedicated to Facebook was because of the emotional investment the company cultivated. It felt like you had access to information and the right to voice your opinions, which were going to be heard. You knew the CEO heard your opinion, because you were encouraged to say it directly to him! Direct lines communication were very important, and employees eagerly tuned in to the company’s Q&As and all-hands meetings and engaged with our internal communications tools globally.

Facebook was always a very open and transparent company by design. Mark Zuckerberg and the other founders really liked the idea of debate and made sure to avoid keeping things confidential internally as much as possible. This was essential for two reasons. Firstly, it was this culture of debate and transparency that made Facebook an amazing place to work and helped us attract a lot of talent who would invest themselves fully in the company. Secondly, because Facebook was a controversial site, with new features and privacy blowouts always causing controversy in the press, everyone needed to be able to speak their mind both to steer
It was this culture of debate and transparency that made Facebook an amazing place to work and helped us attract a lot of talent who would invest themselves fully in the company.

We had a lot of employees who came from Google. Google has this really strong company culture that’s tied to its identity, but this sometimes seemed very contrived. There are things that you do at Google just because it’s Google and that’s what you do there. It’s like there’s a top-down decree: “This is what our culture is.” It may have evolved organically initially, but at some point it becomes artificial when someone decides: “Oh, our culture is people ride scooters around the office and wear goofy hats,” for example. It becomes what new people are taught. That was something we wanted to avoid at Facebook, though clearly it becomes more difficult as you get larger. Early on, the culture was just what we did, and the fact that Mark ultimately made most of the major decisions himself. That role of asking him questions in front of everyone was fun on the one hand, but also terrifying – I was always thinking one of these days I’m going to say the wrong thing and it’s going to be a disaster!

These Q&As had been casual not-so-corporate affairs, but by the time I took on internal communications they were large enough that they required more organisation. As it happened, Facebook was big on building its own tools and systems for organising information internally. Co-founder Dustin Moskovitz left Facebook in 2008 to found Asana, which can trace its roots to some of the tools we developed internally at Facebook.

At Facebook, I really wanted to keep it organic and foster the culture of debate and openness rather than direct it. A big part of this was to lead internal communications by example. Building on this idea of debate, every Friday, anyone could ask Mark Zuckerberg anything they liked. If nobody was asking questions or people were asking less interesting questions, Mark told me one of my jobs was to ask him the hardest questions I could think of every week. So I’d say: “Mark, aren’t you completely wrong about ‘x’?” or “Why are we doing things this way?” At a company like Facebook, there were plenty of hard questions, and a lot of them stemmed from

The company in the right direction and to maintain their level of commitment.

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but as a company grows it’s hard to find that balance between letting the culture evolve into what it will, versus holding on to what we had been doing and deciding that that was, in fact, our culture.

At Facebook, internal communications was a great role. I always think that the culture of any city is not determined by the mayor, it’s what the sum of all the people in the city do. That’s really how the culture at Facebook was. Communications is a great opportunity to influence, drive and preserve company culture.

Internal communications is especially interesting as you are in this unique position to coach and work with people above you and help them understand the best way to communicate. You can really influence how messages are communicated and potentially turn anything negative into a positive – or at least provide a cathartic avenue for helping keep negative things from derailing people’s passion and commitment. A really big part of Facebook’s success was our ability to bring in passionate people and find ways to sustain and fuel that passion through a culture of openness.

Ezra Callahan has a background in journalism and experience in advertising and product management. He worked at Facebook for over five years, focusing on internal communications. In his final two years there, he focused on maintaining company culture, shepherding internal discussions on company policies and strategies, and overseeing internal communication tools. He is currently working on a number of projects in the hospitality and real estate development sectors.

You can follow Ezra on Quora here: www.quora.com/Ezra-Callahan
How we re-lit an unloved part of British Gas

Andy Routledge tells the story of how a small team turned around British Gas’s ‘Pay As You Go’ energy business – taking it from a failing business to the envy of the industry.

In 2007, while working for British Gas, I got a call asking me to fly up to Edinburgh and visit our call centre on the edge of the city.

Intrigued, I arrived at a sterile, imposing building where I discovered that my mission was to join a new leadership team aiming to change the way that our prepayment meter business was run.

You may have had a prepayment meter as a student or in a rented property.

Often they are used as a way to manage energy budgeting.

In the old days, you would put a coin or token in the meter slot at home to keep the electricity or gas on. Without ‘feeding the meter’ you can’t watch TV, cook or take a warm shower, for example. Nowadays, it’s pretty similar to ‘topping-up’ a pay as you go mobile phone, where if you don’t have any credits you can’t make a call.

At the time, the prepayment meter business was poorly perceived internally and externally. I had no real understanding of prepayment and couldn’t see past the misconceptions of others to recognise the true potential of this rough diamond.

The Journal of Internal Communication
What I hadn’t really considered was that since the regulatory, economic and social landscape of the energy market had changed massively since the prepayment business had been launched, this was a business ready for fundamental, transformational change. It needed to become modern, simple to use and right for our customers.

My gut feel, however, was: this is never going to work. It looked like a cause that had lost its ‘mojo’ and I couldn’t see how I could make a difference.

But in fact, the three-year journey we went on was the most measurably successful programme of change I’ve had the privilege to be part of to date.

From start to finish, we not only saw physical change in the environment, but a collective cultural change resulting in motivated colleagues, a great place to work and outstanding customer service through individual ownership. It was a root and branch change.

At the helm was our inspirational leader, Matthew Bateman – to this day I still ask myself: “What would Matthew do?” in moments of doubt.

As a leader, Matthew is a people person who turns complexity into simplicity. He made an effort to speak to everyone, and incredibly, he personally signed and sent a birthday card to every single employee.

I’ll never forget that – such a simple gesture, but its impact was massive.

He also had a very clear vision of what he wanted to achieve and how he wanted to do it. Right from the outset, as he briefed his new leadership team in that first week, he was clear on the key areas that he wanted to fundamentally change and, throughout, he stuck to those priorities.

Having such clear objectives was like manna from heaven for me as a communicator. We often talk about the need to make sure that we’re consistent in our messaging, but everything that he and his leadership team did was centered around four key points:

- **Become a Top 10 Best Places to Work employer.**
  At our first forums, roadshows and brown bag lunches, people just looked at us in complete disbelief – but within weeks I began to see signs that they wanted to believe.
Be number one in J.D. Power’s Customer Service index.
Another challenge on a par with climbing Everest we all presumed – how wrong we were.

Manage costs.

Retain and attract customers.

Such clarity made it easy for us as a leadership team to consistently ensure that everyone knew what needed to be done. Our job was to figure out how to do it!

We had a common language and whilst every leader was a specialist in their own part of the story, I worked with them so they were increasingly comfortable with every chapter. By doing that consistently, over time the level of colleague trust went from minimal to complete.

The idea of retention and attraction also extended through to our people too. Matthew wanted to invest in all employees and develop their capabilities – we were a key employer in the area and he had a strong belief that we could ‘grow more good’ and have new talent queuing round the block to get in.

I commuted from Reading every week and lived with the leadership team in a shared flat in Edinburgh, which was also used as a small training facility during the day. Something really strange happens when you live so closely – you start to get to know people in a really authentic way, very differently to our office personas. You understand people’s weaknesses and strengths. I think that’s the sort of thing that bonds leaders and creates change in a totally different way to anything that I’ve ever experienced before or since.

At all of our sites in the UK, India and South Africa, we started with the critical basics – a

Our new business name – Pay As You Go Energy or PAYGE – was chosen by our employees during our launch roadshows and became a symbol of pride. We rewarded the employee who came up with the name with a trip to London for him and his family – a small but important example of how we encouraged pride and recognition.
common identity and purpose. We rebranded the offices, mapped out the journey ahead visually and began our dialogue with employees. This flushed out hidden obstacles, new ideas and increased engagement.

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We tapped into the incredible talent and expertise that had been hidden away and enabled it to flourish. Team members were invited to become champions in areas like healthy eating, green energy and employee benefits. We created an atmosphere where all were equal and everyone had a part to play in creating something special.

We invited technical experts to help us educate employees, so everyone knew what a meter was, how it worked, and we visibly displayed meters in the offices. Developing customer profiles and visiting customers’ homes helped us to create a film series called Maple Street where we brought some of our characters to life in a fictional neighbourhood. We wanted customers to be real, to challenge misperceptions, so we could change our service to meet their needs.

The project lasted three years, and at the end of it we all knew that we’d been part of an incredible journey. We even captured some of the highlights in a book that we offered to every employee to take home and share with their families. The personal ownership and pride was shining through and we’d achieved our strategic ambitions.

Working on the project fundamentally changed my perception of the role that communication teams can and should play. It helped me to challenge my personal values and beliefs. It showed me a blueprint for what’s required to create the right environment for transformational change. It’s amazing how much one plane trip could change so much.

Andy Routledge is currently VP Senior Business Partner, Operations and Technology Employee Communications, Barclays. He has over 18 years’ global experience in PR and internal communications with several major FTSE 100 companies both in-house and agency side. He is married with three children.

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www.gatehousegroup.co.uk/joic
Crossrail – it’s all about the vision, mission and values

Richard Davies, Crossrail’s employee engagement lead talks about the unique challenge of engaging an integrated team of people with nine different employers around a shared vision, mission and values.

At Crossrail my role is to engage and excite people – whether long-term employees or short-term contractors – so that everyone who works on the programme, regardless of employer, feels part of something special. We want to inspire people; we’re building ‘more than a railway’, we’re also creating a sustainable legacy for business, communities, the environment and construction industry, while providing skills and employment opportunities for a new generation.

The little pink book
So how did we go about it? Firstly, our leadership team set out to integrate the Crossrail delivery organisation and create a new, unified culture based around shared vision, mission and values:

- Our vision: Moving London Forward
- Our mission: to deliver a world class railway that fast tracks the progress of London
- Our values: Safety, Inspiration, Collaboration, Integrity, Respect

For several months in 2012, the leadership team held roadshows across the whole organisation to engage staff and gain valuable feedback to validate the new thinking and help embed it within the organisation. We used the feedback to create the communications materials.

The Journal of Internal Communication
Memorable experiences

As a public project, we have a limited internal communication budget. But one thing we can do is create memorable “I was there” moments for people to witness the sheer scale of our work across all projects. Recently, we launched the “Halfway There” campaign in which we organised a series of ‘behind the hoarding’ events for public and staff to mark reaching the halfway stage of the programme. Our biggest ever “I was there” moment was the Woolwich break-through event. More than 600 members of staff attended to see a giant tunnel-boring machine break through into the station box before continuing its path underground to the next station.

Feedback from this programme has been outstanding with 97% saying they were ‘satisfied / highly satisfied’ with the event they attended and 96% agreed they ‘came away feeling inspired about Crossrail and our achievements.’

We also use our reward and recognition programme to embed values. These awards are based on our five values; safety,
aimed at people in construction rather than office based roles – uses augmented reality technology, so you can scan images with a smartphone to access video of what’s happening in the picture – for example a tunnel breakthrough.

ConnectQuarterly is a regular video, narrated by a senior leader, which includes time lapse footage of construction progress and highlights of key events. Connect in Brief is our weekly email newsletter and

It’s about aligning people around a shared vision, mission and shared values – everything starts from that point. You need to work with your leaders and managers to make them believe in its importance and the rest will follow.”

The Journal of Internal Communication
Employee engagement is more than internal communications, it recognises the work done across the business by our leaders, by our managers, by our values champions, and by everybody working in the business. Internal communications and the wider Organisational Effectiveness team (where it sits organisationally in Crossrail), can act as an enabler and facilitator, but can’t create an engagement culture in isolation. It requires everybody to play their part. It’s about aligning people around a shared vision, mission and shared values – everything starts from that point. You need to work with your leaders and managers to make them believe in its importance and the rest will follow.

CrossrailConnect, our intranet, includes a different site each month for a breakfast briefing. He will sit down with a dozen or so people over a bacon roll and ask them: “What is it like to work on Crossrail? What is it like to work on this project, is it a safe place to work?” Health and safety is a major priority for communications across the programme. At the start of every week, there is a toolbox talk session, with an emphasis on health, safety and environmental issues.

Measures of engagement
We measure engagement through our annual survey called the Big Dig, where we ask people what it’s like to work at Crossrail. We had a 93% response rate in our last survey which is an indication of the level of engagement on the programme. One of our primary measures is finding out whether people are engaged employees. This means you’re satisfied with your job, you’re satisfied with Crossrail as a place to work, you feel motivated in your job, you feel loyal to Crossrail, and you feel proud to work for Crossrail. Being an engaged employee means that you agree with all five of those statements. Last year, we achieved a 5% increase in engagement from 73% to 78%.

With over 20 years experience of internal communications, Richard now works as a freelancer. His recent clients include eBay, O2, BAA, and London Underground. Richard’s varied experience includes external and stakeholder communication and change communications, helping to remodel IC in companies undergoing significant change or restructuring.

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CrossrailConnect, our intranet, includes a weekly leadership blog.

Face-to-face is very important to us at Crossrail too, both to engage the team and to gain valuable feedback. Every month, our senior leaders each visit a different project site for an all-hands meeting, where they update on progress and help the team understand how their work fits into the bigger picture. There’s always a lively Q&A session, followed by a social activity. Our Chief Executive visits

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