

## WINNER'S CASE STUDY

**CATEGORY:** Internal Communications

**ENTRANT NAME:** Torbay Council Communications Office

**ENTRANT TITLE:** Employee Engagement Campaign

The brief: To develop an internal communications programme to ensure that staff morale is improved across the council and they are kept up to date on key corporate objectives.

### **Objectives:**

- Increase staff morale within the authority. Only 11% of staff surveyed in 2009 felt that staff morale was good.
- Increase the percentage of staff who feel that they know what is going on within the council as a whole – only 37% of staff surveyed in 2009 said they agreed with this statement.
- Ensure that staff have an understanding of how their work contributes to the overall priorities of the council.
- Staff are kept up to date on key issues.
- Have the right access to the right information.
- Feel involved in the life of the council.

### **Strategy and tactics:**

- Formed an Internal Communications Working Group with staff representation from all levels to help advise on and develop the new strategy. The strategy was written based on feedback provided in the 2009 internal communications staff survey, for example:
  - *"I receive far too many all staff e-mails and most of the time they are not relevant to me".* A 'daily news' all staff e-mail has been introduced detailing 'need to know' information that is relevant to all staff. Any other news is placed on the news page of the intranet 'inSIGHT'.
  - *"It would be beneficial to get a better understanding of what other teams do."* Shadowing days have been set up allowing staff to spend time in other departments.
  - *"Team meetings are not very informative and often do not happen at all!"* Monthly Team Talks are now compulsory and Team Talk briefing packs are sent to all managers each month containing corporate information ensuring that all staff

receive a consistent message. Each team is encouraged to feedback on any recent successes, comments or questions.

- *"The notice boards are a mess and most of them are out of date."* The notice boards have been revamped with a new banner "Keeping staff informed". Designated Key Communicators have been assigned to each board and they are sent regular e-mails containing consistent and relevant information for the boards. Each board also contains a sounding board allowing staff to anonymously post questions/comments if they wish.
- *"The staff newsletter needs modernising and could be sent electronically rather than hard copy."* 'The Info' has been totally modernised and now contains a mix of need to know and nice to know features including Meet the Team, staff announcements, share success, updates from Senior Management Team and a guest editor. It is sent electronically to all staff and a hard copy is available on notice boards for those people who do not have access to a PC. For the benefit of the visually impaired, MP3 audio transcripts and large print, text-only versions of each edition are available.

Internal communications has been given its own brand using a specific palette of colours so any information that is relevant to staff, stands out to staff!

To engage staff in the new strategy a film was produced internally by the communications team as an alternative to a corporate strategy document and circulated to all staff. The film showed council staff going about their daily work quoting "It's good to talk" and provided an overview of the new strategy and the changes that were being introduced as a result of staff feedback.

A "you said, we did" style document was also produced for staff which detailed the feedback from the 2009 internal communications survey and what has been done as a result.

## **Outcomes**

An internal communications survey was carried out in January 2011. Despite the difficult economic climate and budget reductions the survey showed a remarkable increase in staff morale – from 11% to 68%.

The percentage of staff who feel they know what is going on in the council as a whole also increased from 37% to 78%.

Other comments from the survey included: "I think internal comms have vastly improved over the last 6 months. News is in one place, it's consistent, it looks good. Well done Comms Team." "It has improved dramatically - there is a more consistent approach and the new design for all staff comms is clear and stands out!" "Centralised. Consistent.

Consolidated info circulated. Inclusive of all staff. Developed pro-actively and professionally.”

### **Budget**

The new internal communications and engagement programme was introduced at minimal cost to the council – around £100 to print the new banners for the notice boards and officer time. Savings have been generated in terms of printing costs of the staff newsletter which is now electronic.