



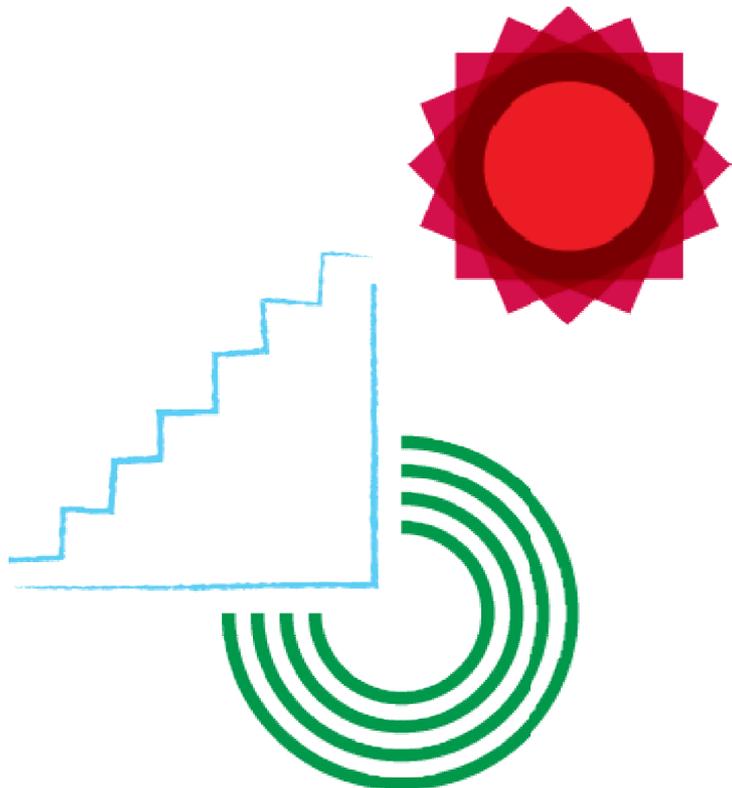
ENGAGE
FOR
SUCCESS

The National Archives
Kew
Richmond
TW9 4DU

Jane.Craigie-Payne@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Case Study by Jane Craigie-Payne



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

What do we do?

The National Archives is a non-ministerial government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. As the official archive of the UK government, and for England and Wales, we are the guardians of some of our most iconic national documents, dating back more than 1,000 years. We also lead the wider archive sector in England. Our role is to collect and secure the future of the record, both digital and physical, to preserve it for generations to come, and to make it as accessible and available as possible.

We employ around 600 staff, of which the overwhelming majority are based at our headquarters in Kew with a small group of staff based in an office in Norwich.

How are we doing?

Attendance / sickness has improved year on year, from an average of 11.4 days sickness at April 2008 to 5.6 days at April 2012 - better than the average for both the public and private sectors.

Our staff survey engagement scores are improving year on year. We first took part in the Civil Service survey in 2010 and our overall engagement score was 65%, putting us in the top-performers category. In the 2011 survey, we had improved our engagement score by 3% to 68%.

The challenge

In 2008 we participated in an employee survey. With a response rate of just 53%, the results were very disappointing, and showed that our lowest levels of staff satisfaction were in the categories of 'Leadership' and 'Fair Deal'. The survey ranked us against the 383 organisations of a similar size that also completed it, with our rankings on each of the different categories ranging from 198th to 286th.

In 2009 the organisation went through a restructure and redundancy programme. Though we ensured that support was available to all staff during this period of change, inevitably there was some negative impact on their engagement.

The other area of concern to us - strongly evidenced by our 2008 survey results, and clear throughout our restructure programme - was that across the organisation we were not offering enough support for line managers in building their skills so that they could manage their teams more effectively.



So what did we do?

The HR team was restructured, introducing Business Partners and HR Managers. This gave us the opportunity to review how HR supported the business. One of the outcomes was that managers were now expected to take responsibility for dealing with issues such as capability and attendance within their teams (with support and guidance from HR). Another was that responsibility for employee engagement was transferred to our Organisational Development team within HR.

In 2009 we reviewed our performance management process and simplified it to ensure that the importance of how we do things, and not just what we do, was more deeply embedded. By making the administration easier, we have ensured that the message our staff get is that performance reviews are about the conversations you have with your manager, and not about filling out paperwork.

We introduced a comprehensive management development programme which provided training on all aspects of people management, and included the opportunity for managers to become Institute of Leadership Management accredited. We run workshops for managers at least twice a year. The workshops are an opportunity for our managers to hear about what is going on across the whole organisation, give their views and discuss issues so that they are engaged with The National Archives and are able to share this with their teams.

The Organisational Development team meets with the Internal Communications team once a month to discuss our engagement work, and to agree initiatives to support it. Regular events include our staff forum (chaired by our Chief Executive,) Executive Team Q&A sessions and wellbeing events, for example talks from our employee assistance programme providers.

An encouraging outcome of the changes that we've made has been the increase in initiatives that have been driven by staff. Engagement is often bottom up rather than top down. Examples include: staff run quiz nights, Summer and Christmas parties organised by our sports & social club, an annual diversity week and green day and even craft fairs where staff can share and exchange products that they have made.

Following on from the management development programme, a group of managers developed a set of guiding principles that reflect the value and insight gained from the management development programme. This was done with no direction or input from HR or the Executive Team.

In 2010 we initiated our 'culture project' – a series of projects run entirely by staff volunteers that looks at a number of different areas affecting culture at The National Archives. Among other activities, the project has

refreshed and re-launched our organisational values, has worked on career-progression options and has interviewed our leadership team about the skills we will need for the future. During 2012, we are holding a series of events to promote and communicate more widely the work done by the volunteers on the culture project.

In the last few years engagement in The National Archives has become an intrinsic part of the way we work, embedded in everything that we do. Increasingly we find that we don't label events and activities as being 'engagement'. It's just how we do things.

