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ADVICE, TIPS AND CASE STUDIES:

The Mind Gym: Tapping into what drives and motivates employees

How to recognize employees

Common difficulties that occur during change programs

Listening exercises

Using stories to engage employees

Building engagement through face-to-face interaction

Collaborating with wikis

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From the editor

An *employee engagement toolkit* brings together a collection of exclusive articles for members and trialists of *the Internal Comms Hub*.



Annie Waite

Inside you'll find case studies and advice from a range of experienced internal communication practitioners and consultants, including some of *the Hub's* dedicated team of experts.

Michael Rudnick, Global Intranet and Portal Practice Leader from research organization Watson Wyatt Worldwide, provides his thoughts about the featured articles in this report and comments on the current trends in employee engagement. He's also one of the *Hub's* editorial board guest experts, so pose your questions to Michael via the *Hub* at any time.

As the award-winning *Hub* fast-approaches its second birthday, we're proud to announce that more than 16,000 communicators from businesses around the world have signed up for membership of the site. Members include BP, Shell, Ernst & Young, Visa, the World Health Organization, Vodafone, Ericsson and HP. You can network with these practitioners via the *Internal Comms Hub* Members' group on the Communicators' Network: www.communicatorsnetwork.com

Since January 2007, we've uploaded more than 300 new articles, redesigned the site and overhauled its functionality, introducing an 11-strong editorial board who are all available to answer your specific comms queries. We've also added a wide range of audio and video guides for you to download.

So, join *the Hub* now to access an enviable selection of tools, tips, templates, expert advice, peer discussion and the latest news about world of internal communication.

I hope you enjoy this short report. Please get in touch with any feedback or suggestions for the next topic you'd like us to cover.

Annie Waite

Editor,

An employee engagement toolkit
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The Internal Comms Hub is Melcrum's membership website for internal and corporate communicators around the world. Packed with practical tips, ideas and advice to use right away in your job, register for a free trial of the site at: www.internalcommshub.com

**"By giving employees the sense they were in control of their own destiny, they were more engaged in the change process."
Angela Sinickas,
page 10**

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Foreword: Michael Rudnick

Employee engagement - the Holy Grail or just another approach to employee communication?

One thing is certain; employee engagement has a very strong impact on an organization's bottom line. Companies that have employees with high engagement levels have better financial performance.

However, a surprising number of myths, misconceptions and false assumptions can lead companies down the wrong road when it comes to building employee engagement. As a result, investments in time and money are directed at activities that do little to increase engagement levels, resulting in missed opportunities to motivate and focus employees in ways that have a real impact on productivity and financial performance.

Increase engagement, increase productivity

According to Watson Wyatt's 2007 Work USA survey of 12,204 full-time US employees across all job levels and major industry sectors, the most engaged employees are more productive, deliver higher return to shareholders, and make better use of corporate assets. Moreover, analysis has determined that employee engagement is a leading indicator of financial performance. That's right; companies that take steps to improve engagement levels can expect to experience higher subsequent financial returns.

This report's authors, all respected communication practitioners or consultants, have outlined solutions that cover all aspects of driving employee engagement - from change management to recognition, storytelling to training, using both face-to-face and wikis. Of particular interest is the combination of these techniques using the latest in web 2.0 collaboration and social media technology.

Advertising and marketing experts have found that these new technologies - which provide unprecedented opportunities for users to create content and actively participate in the interaction among many constituents, is a powerful driver for engaging consumers in ways not previously possible.

Knowing that people use web 2.0 technologies - 99% of which are focused on communications and collaboration - no differently at home and at work, leading firms are starting to expand the realm of engagement via extremely easy-to-use tools that enable users to create and contribute as much as read and consume. This "user-generated content" approach is having even more dramatic impacts not only on employee engagement, but on how communication functions are structured, the skills of the practitioners, and the communication policies and guidelines within these firms.

This employee engagement toolkit contains many terrific ideas that can help you get your employees engaged in your business.

Thanks,
Michael Rudnick



Michael Rudnick

is Global Intranet and Portal Practice Leader at Watson Wyatt Worldwide.

He's also the Internal Comms Hub's guest expert in social media and employee engagement.

For more guidance on employee engagement best practice, pose your questions to Michael via the Internal Comms Hub editorial board:

<http://www.internalcommshub.com/open/editorialboard/editorialboard.shtml>

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The Mind Gym: Tapping into what drives and motivates employees

The Mind Gym offers companies and individuals 90-minute training sessions focusing on techniques that help people enhance their self-awareness and communication skills. Octavius Black, the company's founder and managing director, has developed the concept of "change jujitsu", which is based on martial arts principles and focuses on harnessing employees' individual and collective strengths to achieve the outcome that the company wants. The idea is to tap into employees' self-interest to transform both individual and organizational performance. Change jujitsu shapes and influences internal communication by identifying what drives and motivates employees and by using this information to develop tailored channels and messages that engage employee audiences and drive successful change programs.

Change jujitsu: finding out what makes people tick

Change jujitsu applies the core principle of consumer communication - that people make decisions that are in their own self-interest - to employee communication. Black illustrates this with an example. "People choose to buy Mars Bars for various reasons: we like them, we're hungry or we feel like a treat. None of us ever buys a Mars Bar in order to help boost Masterfoods' profits. Yet we're all aware that Masterfoods sell Mars Bars for one reason above all others: to make money," he says.

"When it comes to employee communication, we often forget that principle and communicate on the basis of what the organization wants, rather than tapping into employees' self-interest or motivation to benefit the organization."

Black's model for effective change communication applies marketing - or customer communication - practices to internal communication. Whereas employee engagement surveys are typically designed to uncover attitudes and opinions about the organization, the objective of customer and market research is to understand people's needs and preferences in order to target them more accurately and convince them to change their purchasing patterns.

The Mind Gym applies this concept to employee research by finding out what makes people tick and using this information to engage them in organizational change. "In the change jujitsu world, staff surveys don't worry too much about whether employees read the corporate newsletter. They find out what they're like as people," states its website. "This insight enables them to produce communication that really hits the spot."

Black and his team use a combination of precision surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups to find out what drives and motivates people. The key is to ask people questions that reveal their attitudes and preferences - to find out what sort of people work for a particular organization. "We might ask people what they'd like to be better at, what their favorite brands are and where they would like to go on holiday. Instead of asking employees whether they read the corporate newsletter, asking them what newspaper they read reveals how they like to find out about what's going on in the world," he says. "We then use that information to work out how to communicate with them. If you understand your target audience, you can frame communication in ways that appeal to them."

Innocent Drinks decided to scrap induction programs and take a different, welcoming approach. For example, new joiners receive:

- A friendly letter from their new boss which makes light of the “legal stuff.”
- A welcome package with a few key documents about the team and a small gift, such as a book discussed in the interview or something else personal.
- A call from their new boss a few days beforehand checking to see whether they have any concerns or questions.
- A welcome card signed by the whole team and a bunch of flowers.

Black believes that effective employee communication, which reflects the needs and preferences of different audiences, is key to engaging people in organizational change and shifting attitudes and behaviors to align them with corporate objectives. He explains how The Mind Gym helped BP improve safety at one of its refineries by replacing the usual safety sheets, posters and presentations with a fortnightly safety bulletin written in the style of British tabloid *The Sun* – the most popular newspaper among refinery staff. It was written as if it were an independent newspaper, packed with easy-to-read stories and punchy headlines, rather than a piece of management communication. “Because it emulated their favorite newspaper, it got people reading,” explains Black. The results were dramatic. Within 24 hours, everyone was talking about safety. Within three months the refinery had the best safety record in its 70-year history, and within 18 months it had one of the best safety records in the company.

Creating personae: an innovative approach to audience segmentation

Tailoring communication to the various groups and individuals within a business often entails a degree of audience segmentation. “The assumption that all employees are the same is as mysterious as the notion that all customers are the same,” says Black. “Of course you can’t treat each individual differently, but you can identify typical employee profiles within the business.”

Using targeted employee research to identify the various employee profiles within a business, The Mind Gym has developed an innovative and creative approach to audience segmentation. Working with Royal Mail, Black and his team developed three detailed personae which together represented a rich picture of the employee audience. “We did lots of interviews, identified the main values and attitudes within the business and turned our findings into imaginary people,” he explains. “We even created portraits. The personae were so realistic that we were asked how we’d convinced these people to give us so much information and let us take their photographs. But in fact we’d invented them!”

Creative communication

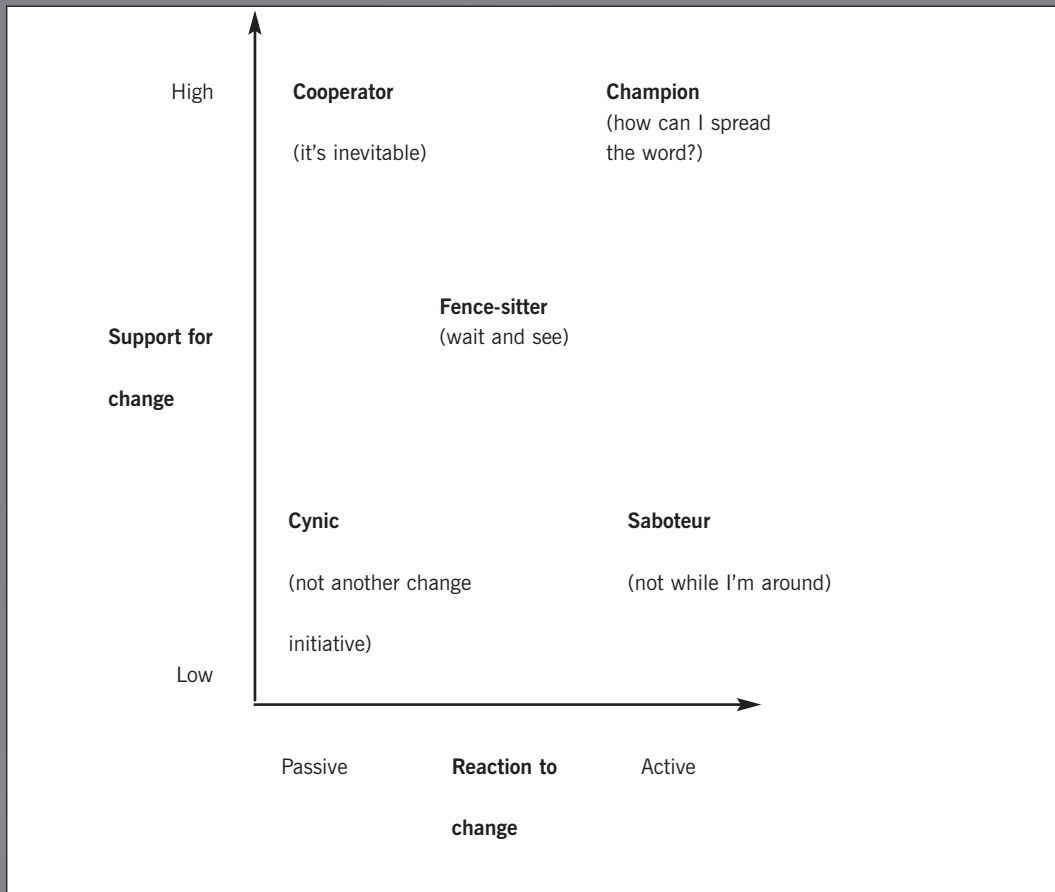
Black and his team use this detailed information to design compelling change communication that is positioned to appeal directly employees’ self-interest. The following examples demonstrate that The Mind Gym’s creative approach is a significant factor in the success of these initiatives.

Mapping different reactions to change

Change jujitsu acknowledges that various individuals and groups within a business react to change in different ways. Figure 1 (page 7) highlights five key ways in which employees generally react to organizational change. Black emphasizes the importance of recognizing that:

- all five reactions are likely to occur during any significant change initiative;
- individuals react differently depending on the nature and context of the change; and
- people often shift between the different groups at various stages in a change program.

Figure 1: Recognizing different reactions to change



Change communication must therefore tackle each group, both individually and as part of the overall mix. Black believes that the challenge is to recognize all these groups and manage the shifting relationships between them. "It's all about understanding people's motivations," he explains. "For example, 'saboteurs' are usually demotivated for very clear reasons. Perhaps they resent not being involved, can't see what's in it for them or feel that it's challenging their role or their identity in the workplace." It follows, therefore, that change communication needs to address these and other negative reactions by helping people understand how they can gain from the change.

Equipping employees to embrace change

The Mind Gym's approach challenges Lewin's "unfreeze, move and sustain" model. Instead, Black believes that the most effective approach is to equip employees with the skills and capabilities to embrace continuous change. His philosophy is that the most effective change initiatives will look and feel like a personal benefit. This entails positioning training and development in a way that appeals to individuals' self-interest. Learning and development makes employees more capable and enables them to take more responsibility for their lives and their future. As a result, they're more willing to embrace organizational change. Black explains how electrical retailer Currys used this approach to maintain employee engagement and motivation during a major restructuring that included cutting the workforce by some 40 percent in two years.

The Change jujitsu approach to internal communication

- More stories and pictures and less corporate rhetoric.
- More facilitation and discussion rather than just putting out messages.
- A few carefully crafted key messages only.
- Local chat and general conversations encouraged.
- Different media and messages for different appetites.
- Less supposed certainties (which often aren't) and more themes and suggestions.
- Articles with an independent voice and a consumer style – more like celebrity magazine Heat or The Economist than an e-mail from IT.
- More references to what's happening in the "real" world – be they celebrities, news stories or the latest tunes.

"Management were concerned because they wanted to keep people motivated during the transition. At the same time, they needed to reduce costs and improve customer service. So we ran a series of 90-minute workouts such as "Me, me, me" and "Create your own luck," which are about working out what you want in life and about optimism in various forms."

By focusing on the individual and their personal development, Currys was sending a clear message to employees that the company cared about them as individuals even though it was undergoing a program of redundancies. This produced positive business outcomes, including a 148-percent increase in positive attitude against a control group (the workouts were optional). Turnover decreased by 30 percent and the company delivered its best customer service in 21 years.

Change communication that offers people choices also helps to engage them in the change process. "Rather than telling people that they should change their behavior, set out a range of options, along with the likely implications of each, and ask them to choose," advises Black. "Our workout on influencing and persuading follows the same principle. We don't tell you how to influence people. Instead, we outline nine influencing tactics that psychologists have developed. We then explain the likely implication of each and how you can mix and match them to create your own strategy. This approach makes people more capable to deal with future situations and therefore makes them more change resilient."

Stories bring change to life

Black and his team also work with leaders to make their change messages resonate with employees throughout the business and engage them in collaborating during change. "One of the great unused tools is storytelling," he says. "People love true-life stories, so we help leaders develop compelling stories that bring change to life."

To convince employees at a pharmaceutical company to attend an in-house training session, potential attendees were sent a pill box along with the message, "If you could take a pill that made you great at influencing, would you take it?" Inside were some sweets and another note saying, "That pill hasn't been invented yet, but we've got the next best thing – a 90-minute workout."

2

How to recognize employees

Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton, best-selling authors of *The 24 Carrot Manager* and executives with the O.C. Tanner Recognition Company, believe recognition is most effective when it is:

- **Positive** - managers sometimes use recognition as a time to talk about how far someone has come, or how they could have done even better. This is not the time or place. Comments must be positive and upbeat.
- **Immediate** - too often by the time an employee is recognized for a job well done, weeks if not months have passed. The closer the recognition to the actual performance the better.
- **Close** - recognition is best presented in the employee's work environment among peers.
- **Specific** - recognition is a time to point out specific behaviors that reinforce key values.
- **Shared** - typically, recognition comes from the top down; however, recognition that means the most often comes from peers who best understand the circumstances surrounding the employee's performance.

Gostick and Elton offer these tips for managers making recognition presentations:

Do:

- **Invite others** - schedule a timely presentation and invite peers and other co-workers to join in the celebration.
- **Be specific** - rewards should recognize results that reinforce company values and business objectives. The award presentation provides an opportunity to connect actions and expectations and instill company values into the hearts and minds of employees.
- **Link accomplishments** - after talking about the individual, talk about the company's values and how the individual's above-and-beyond efforts demonstrate those values.

Don't:

- **Be unprepared** - learn the recipient's preferred name. Learn some things about his or her accomplishments. And ask other people to make comments.
- **Embarrass** - the best way to lighten things up is to be friendly, cheerful and sincere. If there's a light-hearted story or anecdote - one that you feel would be appropriate to bring up - ask your recipient about it first. And don't embarrass shy employees. They may prefer private recognition.
- **Get into legal trouble** - don't make any promises or say anything that could get you or the company into legal trouble, like "We're looking forward to working with Sally for many years to come," or "Alan's really guaranteed his place in this company." Also, never make remarks about a person's age, gender, race, appearance, religion, etc.

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ANGELA SINICKAS: Common difficulties that occur during change programs

During her experience working with change communication at HR and management consulting firms, Angela Sinickas, president of Sinickas Communications, found that inexperienced, newly-qualified consultants would be shocked when the change program never ran according to plan, and unexpected difficulties arose. The most common difficulties that occur during change programs include:

1. Loss of productivity

"With productivity loss, you're only able to influence how long this period lasts and how deeply it drops," Sinickas claims. She cites working with an organization that distributed over-the-counter pharmaceutical products such as aspirin and bandages, which merged with another company with distribution centers in some of the same areas, and consequently some distribution centers needed to be shut.

In order to decide which distribution center to close and to retain productivity levels, the organization announced the criteria required for the centers to remain open, such as overall productivity and safety levels, as well as individual performance, over a three-month period. "By giving employees the sense they were in control of their own destiny and weren't passive victims, they were more engaged in the change process, and the impact of change on productivity levels was reduced." Although it took longer than predicted to reach the projected revenue as in many mergers, sales volume was maintained and the merger went relatively smoothly," Sinickas says.

2. Loss of your best employees

When companies go through a merger, acquisition or reorganization, staff consider their job security, and the most marketable employees begin looking for work, whereas the worst employees hope they won't be affected by the change. "The danger," Sinickas says, "is that by the time you've decided who you want to keep, your best employees have already left." She suggests two options:

1. Identify employees to adopt as "buddies". By informing them early on that you recognize and value them as part of the new team, you should be able to involve them in key projects and engage them in new initiatives.
2. Sinickas cites a company which reduced multiple call-centers to one large center. To achieve this, the company needed to close down the centers gradually while moving the services over as customers continued calling. They created a schedule for the closure of each call-center, and worked out the number of staff needed for each week of the process.

Employees were given employment contracts promising them a bonus if they remained until a specified date, but if they left before then, they would lose the bonus. They were also allowed considerable time off for job interviews. In addition, HR representatives from other local organizations with call-centers were brought in to conduct interviews on-site. This assisted in reducing worry levels when the call-centers closed since the time periods were clear, there were rewards for staying and there was considerable support in finding new jobs.

Angela Sinickas is the president of Sinickas Communications, Inc.(www.sinicom.com), an international consulting firm dedicated to helping corporations achieve business results through focused diagnostics and practical solutions. She is also the Hub's communication measurement expert and you can contact her at: www.internalcommshub.com/open/measuring/asktheexpert/index.shtml

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EXPERT ADVICE: Listening exercises

Jacqui Hitt, founder of business consultancy, JMH Consulting, suggests this exercise to help managers boost their listening skills.

In pairs, undertake the following three activities:

Level 1: Listening

One person listens while the other talks. The person talking describes a holiday they took and what went well and could have been better. The partner listens to the other person's story and interprets it entirely in terms of their own experience. This means commenting on what the person is saying and offering an opinion. The pair then discuss how it felt to listen and be listened to at level 1. Normally the partner is busy listening to what is going on in their own internal dialogue and making judgments rather than listening to the other person. This can leave the person talking feeling they haven't been listened to.

Level 2: Listening (sometimes referred to as active listening)

Working with the same partner - and the same story - this time the focus is on being curious about what the person telling the story is saying. The person listening asks questions, clarifies points and summarizes what they are hearing. The pair then discuss how it felt to listen and be listened to at level 2 and how it differs from level 1. In this instance people usually feel they have been better listened to and that they have learned more about the other person.

Level 3: Listening

Again working with the same partner, but this time a different story. The focus is now on listening to the emotions and words. The task for the person listening is to follow both the story and the emotions to get a more rounded view of what the other person experienced. They then discuss the differences between the three levels. This usually results in people realizing how much they usually miss in a conversation and how great the experience is to be fully listened to.

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Using stories to engage employees

In 2001, Parcellforce Worldwide set out on a challenging journey to turn a business losing nearly £200 million a year into a profitable concern. The company made some massive changes - halving the size of the network, concentrating on UK and international express services, making major investments in technology, and changing ways of working - and in 2005, the final year of its turnaround plan, it achieved break-even. "Getting out of the red' and into the 'black' was a landmark for everyone in the company and there was a collective sigh of relief that we'd made it," says Susan Jackson, Parcellforce Worldwide's head of internal communication.

Maintaining momentum during change

Having gone through a second phase of operational restructuring during 2004, staff at all business levels were showing signs of change fatigue. Since the start of Parcellforce Worldwide's turnaround plan, the organization had worked actively to engage its people in business priorities. "Internal communication had played a critical role, helping and encouraging people to understand the business and their role in it, and to take ownership at local level," explains Jackson.

But, with the threat of closure removed, staff were confused about how close the business was to achieving its objectives. Meanwhile, the senior leadership team wanted to lay the foundations for a sustainable, profitable future to ensure Parcellforce Worldwide's survival in a highly competitive market. "The big question for the leadership team then was how could they maintain the momentum," says Jackson. "How could they prevent the relief at getting this far slip into complacency?" The senior leadership team adopted the Sears "Employee-Customer-Profit" model of building profit through the positive attitudes and behaviors of its employees. Communication priorities moved away from "big programs and major surgery" to the vision of becoming "the UK's most trusted worldwide express carrier".

A creative approach to communication

In previous years, Parcellforce Worldwide had taken a traditional approach to sharing the business plan, comprising leadership roadshows, followed by cascaded face-to-face briefings and weekly "Work Time Listening and Learning" (WTL). This approach relied on the ability of the manager leading each session to share information, listen to views and ideas, encourage discussion and then take action. "But feedback revealed that this approach was starting to be mostly one-way and losing its impact," says Jackson. "We wanted a more creative and memorable way of making the strategy relevant to our colleagues and making critical information live beyond initial briefing sessions. We also needed to generate energy and ownership in order to make progress as a business."

Jackson was keen to use stories as a vehicle to convey the key messages and encourage feedback:

"I'd been following in various journals how storytelling was being used to connect people with their organizations, and felt the time was right to try it in Parcellforce Worldwide. Fortunately, our people and organizational development director was similarly minded and we were able to mount a persuasive case to the executive board on how it could help the organization."

Benefits of storytelling

Using stories as a vehicle to convey key messages and generate feedback has several benefits:

- Humanizes the strategy.
- Makes the strategy easy to understand and relate to.
- Involves everybody in the organization.
- Enables employees to contribute their own stories of success and achievement, and generate practical ideas to help increase engagement and productivity.

"We approached a number of suppliers and, following a competitive tendering process, we appointed the consultancy The Storytellers to create a process through which our strategy, or corporate 'story', could be brought to life," explains Jackson.

Sharing the business plan meant integrating it into existing communication channels, so it needed to fit into 30 minute weekly WTL sessions. Sustaining these messages over the following months would be vital, as would be demonstrating how each and every individual could contribute to improving company performance.

Creating the story

Working with the internal communication team, The Storytellers designed an engagement campaign, "Making The Next Big Difference", to communicate the business plan and stimulate a "call to action". Then, working with Parclforce Worldwide's managing director and the senior management team, they created a "StoryMap" - a simple narrative framework structured into a series of chapters, explaining in easy-to-understand language Parclforce Worldwide's journey: where it had got to, the vision for the future, a reminder of its values, what was required to make this transformation work, and four specific priorities on which people should focus.

Called "Focus On Four", these priorities were:

1. Improving the service
2. Growing profitable revenue
3. Working smarter
4. Developing skills and capabilities

The StoryMap was brought to life through a memorable, comic-book style visual identity, to which a diverse audience could easily relate. A series of real-life stories from within the business supported the messages to give them meaning, make them relevant to colleagues' daily tasks, explain what success looks and feels like, and add an element of human emotion.

Engaging the leaders

In July 2005, a large-scale version of the story - led by the managing director and organizational development director - was presented by the senior team at two oneday events to a cross-section of colleagues (general managers, managers, drivers, admin support and union reps). Regular break-out sessions took place to encourage debate, discussion and interaction, and generate stories from "the floor" as a way of gaining buy-in and commitment to the Focus On Four drivers. This created a buzz and saw the emergence of storytelling "evangelists", which made the event more memorable and personal.

Engaging the organization

Following the conference, delegates were charged with engaging their teams in the story and building a response. Everyone was provided with a creative pack, including a personalized StoryMap, Guide to Running Your Sessions and information on what would happen next.

Over a period of 10 weeks, and following the arrival of a large-scale StoryMap at each location, a series of four large posters were delivered one by one at two-week intervals. Each poster - illustrated in the comic-style of the campaign - corresponded to one of the Focus on Four priorities, and came complete with two or three new illustrative stories to bring it to life (generated at the conference), as well as a capture sheet for teams to record their response.

During their regular WTL sessions over the following weeks, and using the StoryMap as a navigational guide, colleagues were encouraged to explore the story and discuss and debate the Focus on Four priorities as the posters arrived one by one. People were invited to build their own story by contributing their experiences. They generated new ideas as to how they might make a difference to the way they worked within their depot or environment, recording their response on the capture sheets. Each story or idea needed to connect to one of the Focus on Four priorities, and the ongoing contribution of new stories of success and achievement helped renew and refresh these messages over a sustained period of time.

The best stories and ideas were fed back to the executive board at a later leadership meeting, and were used to identify a Colleague of the Month in the company's "Big Thank-You" employee recognition scheme. These stories were also used to reinforce the Focus On Four behaviors and actions through Parcelforce Worldwide News, a bi-monthly magazine. The StoryMaps remain in each unit as a tool to reinforce and sustain these messages at WTL meetings going forward.

Lessons learned

"As with any new initiative, we've learned a lot from our storytelling experience," says Jackson. She lists below some thoughts on how to make storytelling a success:

1. **Commitment:** Storytelling needs high levels of commitment from the leadership team to make it work. Together with internal communication, the team must be prepared to invest time and effort for the approach to be effective.
2. **Business plan launch:** Using the storytelling events to launch the business plan to audiences from a cross-section of Parcelforce Worldwide's people worked well and participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. "People who hadn't been invited to such gatherings before felt special, and made the best ambassadors for the approach when they returned to their places of work," says Jackson.
3. **Regional events:** Feedback from the national launch suggests employees would prefer smaller regional events - still led by a member of the executive board, but assisted by each region's management team. So, in 2006/07 Parcelforce Worldwide kept it local when making use of storytelling.
4. **Effectiveness:** The workplace storytelling tools functioned better at the campaign start than at the end. Some units appeared to run out of steam by the last Focus on Four. "In retrospect, we could have done more to identify the units likely to struggle and put better support and checks in place before the campaign was rolled out," says Jackson.
5. **Integration:** Storytelling as a means of sharing business priorities, good practice and focusing action works. "But it shouldn't be viewed as a one-off intervention. The real power comes when it's integrated into the way you communicate - that's when it's really effective," says Jackson.

Figure 2: Top tips for storytelling initiatives

1. Creating a corporate story has to be done at senior levels – high levels of commitment are needed to make storytelling effective.
2. In Parcellforce Worldwide's experience everyone is capable of telling a story, but it's the natural storytellers who become the real evangelists and ambassadors. Make sure you find them.
3. Stories are an excellent way of generating practical ideas for improvement and action at all levels in an organization.
4. You don't need to create a new communication channel for storytelling – Parcellforce Worldwide made it an integral part of existing communication activities.

Results

Making The Next Big Difference storytelling has been a success. "Focus on Four has become the established way of categorizing the information we share with our people and of seeking their input at local level," says Jackson. As is often the case with internal communication, making the direct connection with bottom-line performance isn't easy. "However, the leadership team feels the storytelling approach works and that it has been contributing to business success," she says.

Below, Jackson lists some of the performance highlights from Parcellforce Worldwide's storytelling initiatives:

1. Some 4,000 colleagues went through the storytelling program and were involved in creating an active response at local level.
2. Depots and contact centers have generated dozens of stories and ideas for best practice, which demonstrates the organization's response.
3. The business exceeded its profit target in 2005/06 by around £1 million and expects to exceed its target by around £2.5 million in 2006/07.
4. Employee opinion scores are higher than ever before, with 70 percent of colleagues saying "I enjoy working here."
5. Absence from work has fallen by two percent per year.
6. The Big Thank You recognition scheme was launched off the back of the storytelling campaign, with managers finding it easier to feed back their experiences and lessons learned through stories and anecdotes.

Storytelling has helped Parcellforce Worldwide remove some of the barriers created by conventional corporate communication. This has contributed to a happier and better informed workforce, which is also more willing to share their ideas on how to make things better in the work place. "There is also evidence that storytelling is making us less reticent when it comes to saying thank you and celebrating the successes of individuals, teams and the business as a whole," says Jackson. "We've been committed to embedding storytelling as an integral part of our culture and storytelling is now business as usual."

Some top tips for storytelling initiatives are shown in Figure 2 (see above).

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Building engagement through face-to-face interaction

UK customs and tax department, HM Revenue and Custom's (HMRC) communication strategy recognizes that engaging employees is principally the responsibility of managers. Together with his team, Russell Grossman, head of internal and change communications, has devised a series of initiatives focused on engaging managers throughout the business. "In any change program, it's crucial to engage the leaders," he says. "If you don't involve leaders, they'll lead their groups somewhere else. Even neutrality says something. The fact that some groups aren't changing conveys a message to the rest of the workforce."

Grossman believes that face-to-face interaction is essential to achieve genuine engagement with change, so HMRC's intensive change communication campaign has begun by targeting a group of 450 senior managers. "In the past seven months we've organized three events," he says. "The first was about bonding them as a group; the second was about getting down to business; and the third was leading them through some very specific, hard changes."

"After the first meeting, we realized that 450 was too big a group, so we split the group into a northern half and a southern half for the second meeting and conducted the third meeting simultaneously in London and Bradford via a satellite link."

Segmenting change communication by hierarchy

These meetings were organized at the start of a five-year change program. Given the numbers involved and the scale of the project, the communication strategy has been split into three components based on segmenting the audience by hierarchy.

1. Top-level engagement

Top-level leadership communication sessions have been arranged for HMRC's executive committee and its 46 directors. Underpinning the change communication campaign - and the change program itself - was gaining the buy-in of the executive committee and the board to the leadership engagement initiatives detailed below, including creating change champions.

2. "Leading the Way"

Working directly with the 36 business units, Grossman and his team selected a group of 450 of HMRC's senior managers to attend the initial meetings outlined in the previous section. They were chosen according to criteria based on their degree of command and their power to influence others, rather than their position in the hierarchy. "Someone dealing with important policy decisions may manage only one or two people and therefore have a limited ability to engage others, whereas customer center managers can have 500 people reporting to them," he explains. "It's also important to include managers with the potential to engage people negatively so they're not overlooked."

Following the success of these meetings, Grossman and his team are maintaining momentum by holding a series of monthly meetings for a quarter of the group - or one change communication event per week - which began in February 2007. "These are two- to three-hour sessions against a relatively modular format which seeks to sustain their interest and involvement," he explains. "Continuous change means that the organization is never static and, as each change affects the next, it's crucial to maintain a dialogue with

this key group of managers in order to keep them and their teams informed and engaged." For us as communicators, the challenge is keeping the agenda high quality, fresh and stimulating.

3. A framework for ambition

HMRC has developed four organizational values to support its vision of "ensuring society's financial wellbeing". These values - trust, support, protect and customer focus - are being communicated and socialized across the organization.

Grossman and his team, working closely with the business units, are currently conducting a series of face-to-face "Achieving our Ambition" sessions to engage the organization's 20,000 middle managers in the change program. Topics include active listening and recognizing that people need time to reflect on significant change announcements as well as ensuring that change messages are relevant to people's roles and functions.

"In this case, communication is about understanding through dialogue, explaining what the change means for them and their part of the business, giving people the opportunity to ask questions and finding answers that are relevant to them," explains Grossman. "The measurement test will be whether people behave differently and in due course, whether business results improve as a result of this initiative."

The communications partner model

As employee populations across HMRC are separated by function and geography, it makes sense to combine organizationwide communication with local communication tailored to the workforces in the various directorates. For example, communication aimed at building organizationwide engagement around the values has been passed to local senior communicators and their teams, who have a close relationship to the central communication team.

"Although we have a framework for our ambition, the way our values are promulgated through each of the directorates will depend very much on what duties they perform locally," says Grossman. "Customs staff working to prevent drugs being smuggled into the UK at Dover will meet our ambition in a different way from employees at the income receivables office in Newcastle. Therefore, engagement at that level is devolved to communications within each directorate."

Deploying a range of tools and tactics

The communications group is structured to reflect the balance between organizationwide and local messaging. Grossman manages a central team as well as coordinating a separate team of 15 senior communicators - communications partners, many with their own local teams of practitioners - who work with their directorates' senior teams, tailoring messages specifically to each business unit. However, the entire communications group works within an overall communication framework specified by Grossman, which includes developing a core narrative around the change program and selecting appropriate channels and media to deliver key messages.

Such a large-scale change requires a variety of different tactics. "One tool doesn't work for everybody, so we use a range of tools to ensure that all our people understand why we are changing," explains Grossman. Face-to-face communication is continually reinforced, for example, through visuals that help to keep the change program top of mind across the business by associating it with particular images. These include a diagram of the change, a mind map and a rich picture depicting the change process as a journey. These visuals are used in presentations, posters and printed and online change communications, giving the campaign visual consistency.

Change champions support local managers

As HMRC's change program includes difficult decisions, such as office closures and large-scale job reductions - although HMRC is currently committed to making none of its staff "redundant" - affecting long-serving government employees, the communication strategy includes supporting local managers dealing with painful change messages. The challenge is

that individuals and groups react to change in different and sometimes unpredictable ways.

Grossman underlines the importance of focusing on the positive aspects of change following traumatic announcements. "Although people were aware that the post-merger reorganization would mean closing some offices and losing some jobs, in November 2006 an announcement was made specifying which offices would be affected and how the program would roll out. At the same time, we unveiled proposals which meant that the scale of job reductions could be double what people were expecting," he says.

"Although this was potentially bad news for many employees, we ensured that all change messages focused on the rationale behind the changes. Consistently reinforcing our ambition helps to address negative engagement by focusing on our strategic goals and priorities."

In order to support local managers at this difficult time, Grossman recruited 150 change champions. These were managers selected from the 450 change leaders and nominated by their business units. Grossman explains the rationale behind this methodology. "Engagement is owned by the business, not the communications group," he says. "So it was important to get our business units to nominate the people that they thought were good with their peers and had the requisite gravitas, responsibility and credibility."

The change champions received specialist training, which included sessions on counseling and on dealing with different reactions to the closure announcements. One-to-one interviews conducted with 54 of the change champions after the training revealed that it was extremely well received. Change champions were then assigned to managers who were significantly affected by the announcement.

How the process works

Grossman outlines the process: "First the change champion needed to understand how the announcements affected these particular managers and their teams. The next step was to initiate a conversation with them and ask them whether they wanted some help, and if so, what sort of help they required. Responses varied considerably. In some cases, the phone call itself was sufficient – some managers were satisfied knowing that support was there if they needed it. In other cases, the change champion attended the briefing that the manager had with their team following the announcement. Champions typically supported two or three managers," he adds.

As Grossman explains, this was a tough call, particularly when people hadn't been expecting their offices to be closed. "In some cases people stormed out in tears. In other cases there was simply a stunned silence," he said. "We trained change champions not to take people's reactions personally and to recognize that asking for more information was a sign of engagement. We emphasized that listening is 60 to 70 percent of communication and encouraged them to establish a dialogue with managers and employees."

Timing is everything: preparing for major change announcements

Grossman and his team also found it valuable to give employees advance notice of major change announcements. "About a month in advance, we communicated the message that there would be an important announcement about the proposed changes on 16 November," he explains.

"Not only did that prepare the ground, but it meant that although the content was not released beforehand, the planning and the mechanisms around the announcement didn't have to be arranged under a cloak of secrecy. This was extremely helpful, given the scale of the communication. Although we couldn't disclose its precise substance, we could brief the 450 change leaders on the nature of the announcement so that when the time came,

they were better prepared to answer questions, address any issues that arose and work to engage their teams in delivering the change program.”

Balancing change communication and business as usual

Grossman explains that because the change program underway at HMRC is transformational, it’s systematically altering business as usual. “We introduce mechanisms to encourage behavioral change,” he says. “For example, one of our objectives is to respect our employees more, so we’re introducing a new set of leadership and management behaviors with that aim in mind, but we’ve not yet linked that to the other changes that are transforming the organization.”

However, he acknowledges that part of his role as head of internal and change communications is to ensure that change communication across HMRC is synchronized with the organization’s ambition and its template for engagement. “This ranges from something as simple as rewriting a piece of copy so that it sets the right tone, to keeping the organization’s overall communication strategy focused in the right direction. It also means choosing appropriate mechanisms for communicating with different groups and deciding which messages to devolve to local managers.”

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Collaborating with wikis

Here's how wikis are being used to spur integration and collaboration at the BBC.

"We see (wikis) largely as a business tool," says David Reeves, lead internal communications consultant at the BBC. This business tool is available to all employees - anyone can join an existing wiki or initiate their own - and there's a couple of hundred on the go at any one time. Nic Price, who manages "Gateway," the BBC's intranet, says the popularity of wikis among employees has grown purely from their availability and usefulness as a collaboration tool, as they were never officially "launched." Price explains how the wiki was originally set up by a BBC team called Digilab. "Their function was to find out what people wanted to do, find some technologies that would answer their needs and then just plug them in and make them available." As a centrally managed system, this is now nurtured by Price's team, but it's very devolved. "Anyone can set up a wiki. There's no governance in place in terms of how it's used." Much like discussion forums and blogs, wikis have grown organically within the BBC. "They're being used in all sorts of different ways; for collaboration space, for teams to use on an ongoing basis or for specific projects," says Price.

Wikis in action

Reeves cites an example of how his own team have made use of them. "When I came into leading the team, we had an internal communications process manual based on word documents, which were hard copied. It seemed obvious to turn the manual into a wiki because it allowed us to make changes on the fly and embed hyperlinks. So with one click you're straight to where you want to be." Another dedicated wiki arose directly out of the BBC Leadership Program as an ongoing resource for leaders. The leadership wiki is a constantly changing, collaborative website related to all elements of leadership and management training in the BBC. It contains articles, presentations and internal and external links related to various elements of the program. Users can add new information, share their experience and tips, and comment on what's already there.

Here's an excerpt from a Q&A the BBC offers internally to new users of wikis:

What's a wiki?

A wiki is a sort of website. But what makes it special is that people can easily write new text, as well as read what other people have already written. You use a normal web browser, such as Internet Explorer, to read and edit the wiki pages. Most wikis let you attach files and images to pages so they can be shared.

What makes wikis useful?

Tim Berners-Lee, when he invented the World Wide Web, saw it as a way for scientists to collaborate together - this involved writing as well as "publishing." Indeed the early web browsers had the ability to edit pages as well as display them. Wikis go back to this idea of collaborative creation, putting the tools back into the hands of everyone. This is why it is sometimes called the "two-way web."

What if someone deletes something by accident?

The wiki we use keeps track of every change that is made to a page. If needed you can undo the deletion (or addition) and go back to an earlier version of the page. If someone deletes a page accidentally, it goes into a "trash can" and can be recovered by the administrator for that Space. Only Space administrators can delete whole Spaces. Daily backups are kept of Spaces so they can be restored with little loss of information.

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- * Statistics you can use in presentations and reports
- * Best-practice engagement processes and models
- * Detailed corporate case studies
- * Expert analysis
- * Sample engagement frameworks
- * Checklists and exercises to use when assessing leadership communication style
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Case study companies include:

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- * Southwest Airlines - Getting ahead of your competition with a 'culture committee'
- * Union Bank - Addressing how to effectively overcome employees' barriers to success
- * Hewlett-Packard - Innovations in measuring engagement
- * Coors Brewing Company - Turning the team briefing around
- * Agilent - Influencing pride in the company
- * National Australia Bank - Viral marketing to drive involvement through "early adopting" employees
- * Wanadoo - Putting engagement factors into formal policies
- * Chrysler Group - Engaging employees to create a competitive edge

Plus expert advice from thought-leaders:

- * Jim Shaffer - Four dimensions to employee engagement
- * John Smythe - Four leadership approaches to engagement
- * Christopher Hannegan - Forty key drivers of engagement
- * Andrew Brown - The engagement pyramid

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This new report from Melcrum helps internal communication professionals understand and overcome the challenges they face when planning and implementing their change communication programs.

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Mastering Audience Segmentation

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The Pulse

Packed full of robust data based on a survey of over 1,100 professional communicators, this report presents detailed information on budgets, salaries, structures and trends in internal communication.

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It contains exclusive advice, insight, and practical tools from some of the world's leading authorities on engaging employees in CR. It's also packed with case studies from global best-in-class companies.

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Making Managers Better Communicators features implementation ideas from 44 qualitative interviews, over 50 comprehensive case studies and quantitative data from over 700 HR and communication professionals. It also contains a collation of the findings from eight different research projects conducted by leading organizations over the last decade, proving the impact managers have on engagement and productivity.

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