Category: Best Publication

Company: Scottish Water

Entry title: SW Magazine

Brief and objectives:
The 2017 refresh of our internal communications channels included the development of SW, our new colleague magazine. With our new Sharepoint intranet enabling us to share news more dynamically, we moved away from our monthly newsmag to a bi-annual feature-led magazine.

'SW' aims to create an enjoyable colleagues publication and features bespoke content which doesn't appear on other channels, demonstrating the incredible range of skills and experience across the organisation.

Objectives were to:

- Refresh print offering in response to changing desires (see research) and changing work patterns;
- Reduce spend and paper consumption;
- Engage our audience and help them connect with our purpose

For the first time, we expanded circulation to include our Alliance partners. As well as eliminating the cost and workload involved in a separate publication, this enabled us to incorporate Alliance partner messaging into the wider Scottish Water story and help bring together and celebrate the teams delivering investment in Scotland's communities on our behalf.

Final circulation numbers were 5421, with around 50 copies for external stakeholders in key Government and regulatory departments.

Rationale behind publication, including research and planning:
Internal research conducted in 2015/16 revealed a desire among colleagues for a blend of online and print to deliver news and help people connect with the organisation. We regularly monitor best practice across the organisation, and were keen to update our print offering to reflect a more modern design and authentic, engaging content, allowing us to deliver 'news' via our new intranet.
Thanks to agile and flexible working, increasing numbers of us no longer regularly work from the same office, so we have designed the tone and content of SW to help people maintain a connection with the organisation and their colleagues.

Our story planning aims to blend stories of interest to our very varied target audience, right across Scotland, working in many different disciplines. They range from digital natives, to reluctant tech-users and all the way to a few who have no workplace tech at all.

We now offer niche long reads and opinion pieces for the first time, and expect that people can dip in and out of the magazine over a longer time. With large numbers of operational colleagues in the field, our content is designed to reflect their interests, achievements and priorities.

**Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**
Creativity and innovation were central planks of the procurement exercise we carried out to ensure best value. We sought out fresh perspectives from industry experts and invited new people to work with us. We appointed an internal Guest Editor to help us understand different colleague perspectives and give their own take on magazine contents. Having this tangible employee connection has increased our reach, credibility and encouraged others to get in touch with their own stories.

Our PageSuite version caters for those who prefer digital copies, and will continue to monitor desire to move increasingly online and further reduce our print and distribution spend.

We opted for a bold, fresh new look, stretching the accepted 'SW look and feel' to deliver something different. SW opens up space for debate, opinion, longer reads and think pieces as opposed to corporate news.

**Implementation of tactics:**
To deliver the magazine alongside a busy timetable of leadership and all-employee events, we allocated stories across the team and encouraged exploration of different styles of writing, of content and style, all within consistent tone.

One team member liaised with our designers as a development opportunity and worked to keep the project on track.

For launch we use a variety of internal channels. Given the departure in style, we secured support from our senior leadership community for the change and our 'no-pitch' approach, asking them to trust our ability to populate the magazine with good content which earns its place and interests our people.

We were very hands on in decisions around style and design. We consciously departed from traditional employee magazine formats. Testing content plans with our guest editor and trusted colleagues helped us check we were developing a publication of interest to a wider audience than just our own team.

**Measurement and evaluation, including engagement of target readers:**
The response to our first issue was very encouraging. People from different areas of the business got in touch by email including all our Directors and Board. People took to Yammer using the #SWFeedback from the magazine to say how impressed they were by the first issue, valuing the new approach and professional look and feel. The feedback via email and Yammer is available to view in the attached PDF.

Only 14 people opted out of receiving the publication at home, a small number in an organisation with nearly 4200 employees. A handful of colleagues asked how much the publication cost which has enabled us to have a conversation about the financial savings we’ve made by stopping our monthly newspaper, and the benefits of engaging our increasingly agile workforce.

We also conducted a Slido survey to gather feedback which will help shape our next issue. The most favoured type of story in the magazine were the personal employee stories and the overwhelming feeling people had when reading the magazine was ‘interested’ and ‘proud’. The initial feedback did show that many people were concerned that the magazine was delivered with a plastic cover. Although it was recyclable it is something we are investigating changing for the next issue.

And we’re still learning. We have committed to reviewing the feedback on the magazine after each issue to ensure the format and concept delivers value for our people.