



Category: Internal Communications Campaign

Company: Thread & Fable and Birmingham Metropolitan College

Entry title: Sharing the Friday Feeling

Brief and objectives:

In a busy period of change, 900 staff across eight different colleges in the West Midlands, BMet's internal communications channels and staff praise needed focus, clarity and staff engagement.

Our top-line brief was simple – improve staff engagement and boost regular peer-to-peer praise.

SMART objectives included:

1. Review existing internal channels and identify where gaps exist
2. Boost staff sign-up on Yammer from 44% to 65% and increase actual use and engagement through it as an internal communications channel
3. Develop activity to encourage staff to regularly share peer-to-peer praise that is meaningful, visible and consistent

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

As part of a wider 'Getting to Good' project, BMet wanted to review their internal communications and identify a strategy and activity to connect staff with internal channels and encourage peer-to-peer praise that was seen as genuine and consistent over a top-down approach.

The rationale behind this was to improve the flow of information during a busy period of change, recognise 'good' activity in a more frequent and collegiate way and develop how connected staff felt, all contributing to staff and student satisfaction, wellbeing and performance.

Research, review and plan included:

- Interviews with staff across different levels of the organisation
- Review of analytics from Yammer, SharePoint and social media

- Mapping of existing channels and flow of information, including where gaps existed
- Analysis of 'best in class' examples across public and private sectors

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

The strategy focused on strengthening internal channels, developing two-way opportunities for staff to engage with both corporate messages and in sharing peer-to-peer praise.

This required:

- Driving traffic to Yammer from existing channels and reinforcing where different types of content should be posted (i.e. not updates and social content on a day-to-day basis on SharePoint)
- Providing easy entry opportunities for staff to 'join in' on Yammer. We wanted to boost sign up as well as engagement on the channel.
- Internal communications cut-through at several points over a 3-month period
- Physical and digital opportunities for staff to praise/thank each other

The creative for the campaign needed to be less corporate than the main branding, with a more informal tone of voice, using the secondary colour palette. This needed to work across the digital and physical elements. In addition, content on Yammer would integrate GIFS, non-corporate motifs designed on Canva and use staff photos and local references to college sites, to help connect the staff audience. All of this aimed to achieve cut-through and engagement.

Activity was mapped out around the academic term with a boost needed to remind staff of the channels and regular praise opportunities before the Easter break. This also presented an opportunity to be both creative and innovative, in testing how engaged staff were with Yammer. A treasure hunt idea was developed to provide a channel-specific engagement opportunity that was fun and reinforced the channel whilst also demonstrating metrics that could indicate how sites were engaging with the channel.

Tactics included:

- Varied, less corporate content on Yammer
- Signposting from SharePoint, email and physical activity to Yammer to drive sign-up and engagement
- Use of Yambassador staff group to help shape content and provide staff support
- Amplifying Yammer through Easter chocolate hunt
- Monthly eBulletin from the Executive team, regular webinars and videos from senior staff along with internal emails and SharePoint takeovers
- Executive to use Yammer to thank, praise and lead by example

- Thank you cards and notelets in packs delivered by a desk drop to every member of staff
- Establish a Friday Fanfare group on Yammer to provide a platform to regularly praise colleagues; this encourages a thank you or well done from staff to a colleague or team every week
- Physical trophies to be printed up for each site to be physically passed from peer-to-peer, providing weekly content to the Friday Fanfare group on Yammer
- Groups set up on Yammer to give easy access points to staff

Implementation of tactics:

Based on market research, trend analysis and our own internal research, integrating digital and physical elements required a detailed weekly planning process, distribution of packs across eight college sites and a well-executed content strategy linked to web, imagery, social (Yammer) and internal updates, supported by a team of internal communications ambassadors for Yammer and the marketing and communications team.

Yammer was linked in at regular points throughout the monthly schedule of internal communications across SharePoint, Email, Exec Updates, eBulletins amongst others.

As well as the Friday Fanfare, other groups were initiated to give easy access points to staff such as 'in the news' and 'how to Yammer'.

Yambassadors were tasked with supporting these groups, sharing content, and influencing their peers to join in and demonstrate how easy it was. They offered face-to-face advice locally at sites, helping to minimise the barriers to entry identified by some of the research.

Measurement and evaluation:

Following the research and planning phase over eight weeks, the campaign rolled out from Feb 2018 and within two months saw the number of staff signed up to Yammer grow by 100%, 89% of all staff signing up (up from 45% and far surpassing the 65% goal).

Engagement rates soared by 2642% from the previous year, with more people not only reading and engaging with posts, but also posting themselves.

The pre-Easter chocolate hunt resulted in a 20% uplift in activity from the previous week, over 50 new members of staff signing up; messages up 52% to 8251, liked messages up by 83% and over 20 conversations around #TreatHunt generating likes, comments and photographs.

Qualitative feedback from staff awarded with the physical trophies cite how proud and valued it made them feel, particularly coming from a fellow colleague.

The campaign specifically improved peer-to-peer praise, strengthen internal communications channels and conveyed its core value 'Students at BMet improve skills with great people'.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

It was not an income-generating campaign so against objectives we can observe cost-effectiveness as the below:

1. Review of internal channels: BMet now has a clear internal communications calendar with regular touch-points across different platforms with clarity over which channel is used for what content
2. Sign-up and engagement on Yammer: target was to grow from 45-65% which was surpassed at 85% in just two months. Engagement increased by over 2000%
3. Peer-to-peer praise: weekly 'thanking' through Friday Fanfare or praising colleagues on Yammer has helped develop the conversation over recognition and is seen favourably amongst all levels of staff. The physical Friday Fanfare trophy has maintained momentum, combined with creating new content each week is being seen as a sought after accolade.
4. The pre-Easter chocolate hunt cost £70 and resulted in a 20% uplift in activity from the previous week
5. Thank You packs were distributed to all staff in early February and trophies produced for each site. These were well received and already additional supplies requested for the forthcoming academic year.