



Category: Internal Communications Campaign

Company: Wales Audit Office

Entry title: GREAT Together - changing culture at the WAO

Brief and objectives:

One of our strategic aims is to be a “well-run, accountable and respected organisation that’s a great place to work” and a lot of our internal activities are focused on helping to deliver this.

But we know we’re on a journey.

Our 2016 staff survey showed that there was a lot to be positive about, but improvements were needed in some key areas such as:

- Behaviours
- dignity and fair treatment
- innovation
- engagement with our vision and strategic approach.

A lot of this boiled down to a need to transform some of our ways of doing things.

Our objective was therefore to:

- transform the culture of the organisation,
- improve staff feedback ratings and
- achieve the core strategic aim about being a great place to work.

To help achieve this, we developed a campaign. Other than staff time; the project needed to be delivered within a core budget of circa £1500.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

To devise the campaign, we launched a culture development programme in March 2017, with representation from across the business.

The aim was to:

- produce a new set of staff values and behaviours,
- communicate them effectively and
- embed them into every-day life to achieve positive change.

The plan was to use existing channels and networks to communicate and engage with staff, to keep costs down.

Around 260 people work at the Wales Audit Office and are split into 3 main groups – Financial Auditors; Performance Auditors and corporate services staff.

Reflecting on the previous values work done in 2008, the approach back then was more ‘top down’.

This time, the strategy was to deliver the project in a completely different way – and in the spirit and style of the improvements staff wanted to see. So, it needed to be innovative; inclusive; and positive.

To achieve this, everyone was to be involved in the design and delivery of the values and behaviours – in order to generate a sense of enthusiasm and energy around their creation, secure the buy-in of staff across all levels and to ensure that the desired culture change could be sustained.

The work would be delivered by a core of volunteers from across all parts of the business and all grades – but all staff would be involved in the co-production and in the communication activities.

We didn’t want the internal communications around this to be ‘broadcast’ only, but to be truly two-way; interactive and fun.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

There were calls for volunteers to join the culture planning group – resulting in 27 members, representing all parts of the business.

15 staff workshops were held across our offices in Wales, to generate the new values and behaviours. Well over 50% of staff attended these.

Our mission is to be a “great place to work” and our new behaviours became:

Genuine

Respectful

Energetic

Adaptable

Trustworthy

We wanted the Welsh translation to be creative – choosing the word HYDER (confidence) – to spell out 5 behaviours that mirrored the English.

Six values were also produced - Independence, Innovation, Integrity, Fairness, Future Focus, Collaboration.

The project was always going to be an important one but we weren't expecting it to be as interesting and entertaining as it became.

Staff devised 'Caffi Culture' - a series of coffee and cake sessions to encourage more conversation.

Launch events across Wales got staff writing rap songs about each value and behaviour and performing on video, with a competition to choose the winner. Even the Auditor General and Board wrote and starred in their own rap video.

Our planned all-staff conference focused on the "GREAT Together" theme/title and was organised in February 2018. We delivered it in a way we have never tried before. Staff suggested an 'unconference style', where colleagues could pitch ideas to run sessions and staff would vote on which ones they wanted to attend. An evening reception included an awards ceremony – with categories based on the GREAT behaviours – for staff to vote.

The launch of a new People Strategy was written and branded around the behaviours. A new behavioural framework now replaces the WAO's competency framework – as a value-based approach to recruitment.

Implementation of tactics:

The values and behaviours were launched on St David's Day and our in-house graphic design team devised the branding around a 'spring' theme – using daffodils, leaves, bees to signify Welsh identity, a fresh start and new life.

We used the intranet; yammer; posters and a new computer lock screen to promote the values and behaviours. We also posted blog stories and videos from staff about what they mean to them. A daffodil photo competition was launched and mouse mats, pens and lanyards were handed out to staff featuring the new values and behaviours.

We've introduced 360 degree feedback for leaders, asking questions around their behaviours – and weaving the behaviours and values into our decision making processes.

Measurement and evaluation:

The culture and behaviour programme has already achieved its objectives.

Cultural change is a 'marathon not a sprint' and we will continue on our journey. But in a short space of time, we have delivered a highly innovative campaign totally co-produced and embraced by staff – using a variety of internal communications channels to engage colleagues and make changes long lasting.

Evaluation metrics include:

- 70% staff engagement score in 2017 staff survey – ranking us among the top 10/100 public bodies.
- Improved survey scores around dignity/respect, empowerment, work life balance.

- Increased scores around staff recommending the WAO to friends as a great place to work.
- 97% rated the staff conference as good/excellent with overwhelmingly positive comments.
- We achieved 2nd place in the Iris LGBT 'Iris in the Community Prize' for our film about our diversity and inclusion.
- We reached a Stonewall position of 110 out of 434 employers across UK in the LGBT+ Workplace Equality Index – an improvement on our 251 position last year.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

Using existing channels and events, we delivered the campaign in-house - at a low cost of £1,120, which came in £380 under budget.

Costs incurred were for promotional items including poster boards, lanyards and mouse mats.