



**Category:** Internal Communications Campaign

**Company:** Engage Comms and Harry Fairclough Construction

**Entry title:** Building a communications culture

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**Brief and objectives:**

Harry Fairclough is a Warrington-based construction firm with a 120 year history. Since a new management team took over 10 years ago, it has grown from £15m turnover to a £50m turnover and expanded across the North of England, opening a Yorkshire office in 2012.

The company prides itself on its loyal team, flat management structure, and site-centric approach. However, as it grows, geographically spreads, and diversifies, with more staff working across multiple sites, internal comms is becoming more challenging. Bringing in new talent to aid growth also makes it more difficult to retain the 'family feel' many long-standing team members were used to.

Engage Comms was tasked with coming up with a strategy/campaign which, in tandem with wider external marketing activity, would help to:

- Increase employee engagement and retention in a changing environment
- Increase cross-selling capability across departments
- Help to attract new talent
- Maximise return on investment in the new company website and other marketing/business development activities

**Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:**

Firstly, we designed and carried out a staff survey to assess the current state of internal communications and staff levels of satisfaction with it. This allowed us to build up an authentic picture of how current employees experience working at the firm to shape the new employer branding/recruitment strategy, as well as create an impactful internal communications campaign.

The survey identified that many long-standing team members had begun to feel disengaged from other departments/sites and that new starters were unaware of the great work going on across the firm, making it hard for them to act as 'ambassadors'. However, there was no

appetite for lots of regular communication coming from central marketing that they didn't have the time or willingness to digest.

It was also identified that current external marketing and employer branding activities were not being engaged with by staff and therefore we were missing a trick in terms of utilising the firm's own people to help secure new business and recruit.

### **Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**

The strategy was based on the objectives and insight from the staff survey with a focus on simplicity, clarity, and celebration of success to boost morale, engagement, and cross-team working.

It was brought to life through a new 'Employee Value Proposition' which identified what is unique and special about working at the firm and what values the team embodies.

### **Implementation of tactics:**

1. Internal workshops: We held marketing strategy workshops with the senior team to engage them in wider marketing activity and help them understand how they and their teams could communicate more effectively.
2. Monthly staff e-newsletter: Rather than bombarding staff with lots of content on a regular basis, we made the new monthly staff e-newsletter the focal point and ensured that it was something that team members actively wanted to contribute to, read, and engage with. Each issue features details of the latest contract wins, 'people news' about new starters/staff anniversaries etc, and 'project spotlights' from across different departments to make others aware of what their colleagues are working on. Every quarter, it includes a 'Directors update' about strategic developments to keep staff engaged with the bigger picture/direction of the business.
3. Intranet content: We also ensured that useful content about what was happening across the firm could be found on the intranet and made it into a more active portal where team members who weren't active on social media could see things like the company's Twitter feed and latest LinkedIn posts.
4. Site materials: For those working on site who may access the intranet and emails less regularly, we created materials including posters reminding staff and sub-contractors of the company's social media policy (which encourages involvement and contribution, as well as what 'not to do'), and updates for site team meetings featuring content from e-newsletters.
5. Staff involvement in new website development, launch, and ongoing digital activity: We also involved 'ambassadors' from across the business in the development of content for the new website, which includes a careers section with people profiles showcasing what life is like at the firm. Processes were put in place to ensure information about the latest projects and developments are shared with the marketing team and turned into content for the website for both internal and external audiences. We also worked with team members to optimise their LinkedIn profiles and share

company content from personal profiles as well as following and contributing to what was being shared on Twitter.

6. 120th anniversary campaign: We ran a campaign across all internal and external communications channels featuring content about the history, success, and future ambitions of the firm. This made staff feel like they were part of something to be proud of and helped them understand their role in achieving future growth.

### **Measurement and evaluation:**

A year on from carrying out the initial staff survey, levels of employee engagement have dramatically improved with team members commenting they feel much more informed and referrals for potential new business and recruits coming from existing staff in other teams regularly.

Staff turnover is less than 5%, one of the lowest in the industry, and job vacancies are filled by higher quality candidates much more quickly and easily than previously.

The open rate of the staff newsletter is circa 70% and the click rate has steadily risen from circa 6% to circa 15% as staff have begun engaging with the content more.

Staff engagement with the intranet, website, and social channels has increased significantly and thanks to greater contribution from team members to content, followers on both Twitter and LinkedIn have increased by 20% and users are spending 25% more time on the website.

### **Budget and cost effectiveness:**

Budget: £10k.

By keeping things simple (including cutting out unnecessary design and print costs), utilising existing communications channels/tools, and making the campaign fully integrated with wider external marketing and business development activities, we were able to deliver a robust strategy with clear outcomes for a relatively low cost. The campaign contributed to significant cost savings in recruitment and business development by providing user-friendly content for staff to share with prospective employees and clients to convert them more easily.