



Case Study - The Office for National Statistics

Refreshing internal communication channels

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is undergoing a wide ranging modernisation programme to transform the way it works and delivers its services. We were asked by the Head of Internal Communications, Alastair Dijksman, to help him to review their internal communication channels as a first step in the delivery of a 'connected' internal communications strategy.

Working in partnership with Alastair's team, HarknessKennett designed a workshop-based research approach, analysed findings and developed recommendations. These 'Deconstructing the Channels' workshops provided an opportunity for employees to review the internal communication channels and provide practical, positive suggestions on what they would like to see. The workshops were held in key sites across the UK, and senior managers interviewed face-to-face to provide strategic context for the findings.

Following analysis and feedback of the findings, we continued our work with the team to develop a 'roadmap' of internal communications, enhancements to existing channels and recommendations for the development of innovative communications channels in the future.

We were then asked to firstly help develop a message planning tool and secondly, to support the redesign and rollout of an enhanced team meeting process. The planning tool involves consultation with senior managers and has enabled Alastair's team to use existing channels to better advantage, for example reserving face-to-face or electronic media for high level 'news' and items that require in-depth discussion with managers.

The purpose of re-designing the cascade process was to implement changes that would encourage a higher level of consistency in how leaders approach their team meetings. Our work included designing new support materials, publicising the work of the internal communications team to encourage managers to ask for help wherever necessary, and producing a toolkit for managers explaining their role and providing suggestions on how to improve dialogue within their teams.

"Team meetings are one of the most important ways our people connect with the changes that are happening in our organisation. The challenge is that so much of the process depends on the contribution of line managers who traditionally receive very little guidance and support on good communication."

Working with HarknessKennett has helped us to establish clear priorities for improving internal communication, raised the profile of our team and the work we do, and heightened both visibility of and commitment to our new ONSTalk process across the organisation."

Alastair Dijksman
Head of Internal Communications
Office for National Statistics