

A SHOWCASE OF BEST PRACTICE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

# EXCELLENCE AWARDS

## 2015

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<b>CATEGORY</b>	INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN
<b>COMPANY</b>	AIRCRAFT CARRIER ALLIANCE
<b>TITLE</b>	ONE TEAM DELIVERING THE NATION'S FLAGSHIPS

### ► JUDGES' COMMENT

*This campaign delivered on a business need to create a strong sense of one team across four separate organisations. This was achieved across multiple sites through an exceptional integrated employee engagement campaign. The team cultivated and developed a sense of pride and ownership that will have lasting business impact and will be critical to the future success of the Alliance. The entry included strong measurement and evaluation that showed increases in both engagement and operational productivity.*

### BRIEF AND OBJECTIVES

The Queen Elizabeth (QE) Class aircraft carriers are the biggest warships ever built for the Royal Navy and the programme to deliver them is one of the largest engineering projects in the UK. 2014 was a pivotal year for the programme with the formal naming of first-in-class HMS Queen Elizabeth by Her Majesty the Queen on Friday 4 July, which was a highly anticipated event.

The aircraft carriers are being delivered by the ACA, an alliance between BAE Systems, Babcock, Thales and the Ministry of Defence. With thousands of employees based at more than six sites around the UK, the complexity of planning such a campaign was always going to be challenging, whilst budgeting constraints required the team to be creative in their approach to engaging employees.

Our main objectives were:

- To create a sense of excitement across the alliance about the forthcoming historic event
- To engage and celebrate the people who are working hard to deliver the carriers, highlighting their skills and inspiring them to be proud of their vital contribution
- To create a lasting legacy of a 'one team' ethos.

### RESEARCH AND PLANNING

We looked at past events (previous ship and submarine launches) for best practice examples. To do this, we engaged the teams responsible for delivering these events to better understand their approach, the challenges they faced and successes. Planning for the campaign began twelve months before the event, ensuring the team had time to fully understand the huge task in hand and create an engaging and memorable internal communications campaign.

The team also engaged with Trade Union representatives and other key stakeholders across the partner organisations to gauge employee expectations and test our proposed strategy. Doing

this earlier in the process allowed the team to incorporate improvements and ensure a successful and timely launch of the internal campaign on 26 March 2014, exactly 100 days before the naming ceremony.

The team also carried out research to identify key themes to form the basis of our activity. The overarching message was focused around creating a 'one team' ethos, proudly bringing together skills and expertise from around the UK to deliver the nation's flagships.

### STRATEGY, TACTICS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Employee communications activity focused on engaging employees across all ACA partner organisations and across all sites connected to the QE Class programme. With various partners working to deliver the programme, a project team was quickly established with representatives from each organisation to ensure we had the required resource to sustain our campaign over a three month period in the lead up to the naming ceremony and ensure consistent messaging.

The team implemented a sustained internal communications campaign including:

- **Countdown clocks** – In order to capture employees' attention in the lead up to the event, physical countdown clocks were positioned in prominent places across the build sites. In addition, each industry partner published digital clocks on their internal channels, such as intranet and TV systems.
- **People profiles** – We developed a programme of weekly profiles of employees working on the QE Class programme involving films and posters. These profiles gave us an opportunity to highlight the breadth of skills across the organisations coming together to deliver the ships. The ACA website was updated to include a page dedicated to the people delivering the ships, including a link to the Twitter feed to enable #QECarriers campaign stories to be shared as widely as possible.

- **Employee competitions** – We held two competitions for employees across the ACA. The first was the opportunity to win VIP tickets to the event while the second competition was for two children of employees to present a bouquet of flowers to Her Majesty the Queen as part of the formal ceremony.
- **Local celebration events** - Local celebratory events were held at 15 sites across the UK. The events included a programme of employee-focused activity in the morning leading up to the formal ceremony, such as food stalls and live entertainment from sea cadets and Armed Forces bands, as well as pre-recorded films shown on big screen TVs to create a carnival style atmosphere. A live stream from Rosyth of the formal ceremony also enabled those at local sites to join in the celebrations.

#### EVIDENCE OF REAL ENGAGEMENT OR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Examples include:

- The competitions were well received, with more than 1,000 entrants from across our sites
- As the countdown campaign progressed, there was a surge in demand for employee event tickets. On event day at Rosyth, we were at capacity with more than 3,000 employees and their families in attendance at this site alone
- There was an increase in productivity in the weeks leading up to the naming ceremony, with teams working together to ensure the ship was in a ready state for her naming
- Feedback from employees after the event was hugely positive and we have seen continued momentum on the programme.

#### INTEGRATION OF THE CAMPAIGN WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES

While the internal communications campaign focused on engaging employees across the ACA, it was part of a wider communications strategy which engaged with external media and other key internal and external stakeholders associated with the QE Class programme, delivering a fully integrated programme of communications activity.

#### MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

The ACA completed their third quarterly employment engagement survey in Q1 2015. More than 2,200 surveys were completed, with this figure growing from a previous survey carried out in early 2014. Some key highlights of the latest survey were:

- Over 75% of employees feel engaged in the programme, an increase from 25%
- An increase of 68% in the number of employees who think the QE Class project feels like 'one team'
- Approximately 70% feel motivated to improve productivity, up from 30%.

#### BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

Campaign costs were covered from our annual communications budget. The team worked smartly with artwork, for example, being produced by our in-house graphics team. Working with preferred suppliers, we also produced 15 employee profile videos for less than £7,000. In addition, the competitions were delivered for under £500.



# ABOUT US

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Chartered Institute of Public Relations  
52-53 Russell Square, London WC1B 4HP  
T: +44 (0)20 7631 6900  
E: [info@cipr.co.uk](mailto:info@cipr.co.uk)  
W: [cipr.co.uk](http://cipr.co.uk)



Designed and printed by  
Fox Marketing Services  
T: 01892 617999  
W: [fox-ms.co.uk](http://fox-ms.co.uk)

