



Organisation – British Red Cross

Category Winner - Best IC Person or Team

Awards - June 2019

Creating a Strategic Internal Engagement Team

At the British Red Cross (BRC), our 4,300 staff and 19,600 volunteers help millions of people in the UK and around the world get the support they need if crisis strikes.

Over the last year, our Internal Engagement Team has been on an incredible transformation journey to:

- reshape who we are,
- what we do,
- and how we engage, empower and support our staff and volunteers.

As a team, we have many new team members including a new 'Head of', so we needed to quickly (and truthfully) begin by analysing where we are today - looking at audience perceptions, our strengths and areas to develop to help us create new ways of working and a strategy that would inspire the support of our senior leaders, staff and volunteers alike.

We developed a new, clear Internal Engagement strategy: We surveyed 727 staff and volunteers and spoke to 124 people through focus groups and interviews.

Three clear barriers to engagement emerged - overwhelm, disconnect and poor collaboration. Our open and honest detailed findings and our 'working out loud' approach made sure that our 3-year strategy was quickly supported by leaders and is empowering our staff and volunteers.

We now have three key areas of focus; Connect, Collaborate and Care and under these we have identified critical activities and projects that will help to break down the barriers to engagement.

We built term long term capabilities for communicators across the organisation: Our survey stated that 78% of Creators (those people creating newsletters and local content across the organisation) hadn't received any training in communications! So, we developed the 'Creators Club' – where we provide them with the right tools and support them to support each other in delivering better communications.

We went 'on tour' working with various leadership groups across the business to share good communications and engagement practice. We ran a workshop with the Executive Leadership Team sharing staff and volunteer insight to generate ideas on how they be more visible and role model our values.

We introduced a new model for our Volunteer Representatives to ensure our volunteers have a strong voice and the right support.

28% of people said they did not understand the changes that are happening at the organisation. So, we worked together with key stakeholders to create a new, compelling strategic narrative that focused on the 'why'.

We improved our channels and content: After listening to our leaders we launched a new eNewsletter for them with relevant, dynamic content linked to a new area of our intranet that contained a leader toolkit (hints and tips).

We improved two of our key existing channels:

- 'Monday Update' our weekly staff eNewsletter and moved it to a new dynamic platform so that we have robust insight and the ability to tailor content to our audiences.
- 'Life' our hardcopy magazine has moved to being specifically volunteer focused with quarterly theme based content sourced from volunteers.

We made improvements to our intranet so that the content is clearer.

We've moved from a very reactive, unplanned team, where we were often asked to develop quick fixes and thus didn't feel very empowered, to a more strategic team that sets the agenda on internal communications for the organisation.

Quantitative

- We've seen an uplift in the open rates of Monday Update from 23% per week to now regularly hitting over 60%.
- Average number of monthly intranet views increase from 75k in 2018 to 120k in 2019.
- In 2018, we launched the first ever series of 'Regional Assemblies' across the UK with the aim of bringing staff and volunteers together. 84% of delegates were very satisfied with the event, 89% felt encouraged to speak and to participate and 76% felt their ideas and suggestions of were listened to.
- At our leadership conference in January 2019 delegate feedback was the best of any previous conference: 93% said the conference met their expectations; 94% said they were able to participate effectively

Feedback

- Our changes to voluntary monthly leadership calls have seen a 200% increase in attendance with a 62% increase in leaders who find them very useful.

Our qualitative evidence:

"Over the last year the Internal Engagement team has moved from being reactive to setting the tone and direction for our engagement with our 24,000 staff and volunteers! The new engagement

strategy will be a game changer in building that wider and deeper communications and engagement capability across the organisation." Mike Adamson, CEO

Staff member

"The changes to Monday Update have been great. I now get information which is relevant to me and helps me do my role."

Front line volunteer

"There seems to be much more effort being made to understand what volunteers want from internal communications"

Leader

"The new leadership briefing is fantastic. In an organisation which is so vast and complex, it is easy to digest and really helps me cut through the internal noise to help me better engage my team."