

Better internal communications at HPC

Findings

Through a programme of senior interviews, a survey and focus groups we found:

- Communications within HPC works reasonably well
- There is scope for more consistency in the delivery of communications and small improvements to existing channels
- There is a significant opportunity to refresh understanding of the HPC's performance, direction and challenges
- Prioritisation and focus of management messages will also help the organisation to run more effectively
- "Overall, things are much better here – managers are making an effort" – Long serving individual member of staff
- Benefit can be had from:
 - better communication of the vision and context setting
 - more active feedback gathering
 - protecting the 'family' feel
 - assuring consistency in team comms

Context Setting

- Few people reported themselves aware of the external events that shape HPC operations and policy
- Managers could do more to explain the connection between overall strategy and day-to-day work and the direction for the next few years
- The achievements of the last few years was a consistent theme in EMT interviews but not mentioned in focus groups: EMT members typically have much longer service than nearly 50% of the workforce
- Lack of information about plans for the future a theme of the survey

What information do people get?

- In general, staff are positive about internal communications
- Communications in teams generally works well
- People feel reasonably well-informed about:
 - changes to plans and targets
 - development and training
 - annual plans and targets
 - how they work together as a team
 - housekeeping issues excluding accommodation (e.g. IT, holidays etc)
 - how teams are performing

More upward and lateral feedback needed

- People are not content that they understand the work of other departments well enough - inter-team understanding drives common purpose and sense of 'family'
- Interest in FTP – because it gives a human face to what we do
- Social shyness in large groups
- HPC could be better at celebrating success
- But where strong networks exist people never feel under-informed
- Are teams doing enough to explain their work to each other?

Messaging

- EMT Members conscious of a diverse range of management issues – consistent messaging to the rest of the organisation is important and requires planning
- Employees struggle to explain the direction of the HPC and the 'bigger picture'
- People claim to be surprised by major developments like fees consultation
- Project briefings e.g. Fees consultation well liked – "if a little late"

Team meeting consistency

- High praise generally for the improvements to team meetings over recent months
- But do they happen everywhere?
- Are consistent messages delivered?
- Are they always a forum for checking understanding, debate and feedback?
- Do managers feel they have the necessary skills to handle all situations?

Recommendations

Intranet/Springfield update programme

- Review of Intranet content and design
- Drive to update all Springfield and Intranet entries by end of March
- Develop guidance for 'all employee' emails on Springfield
- Business stories for intranet
- 'Ask EMT' time limited and issue specific

Team discussion consistency

- Marc invited to meetings as an occasional visitor
- Communications skills training for all team leaders
- Best practice sharing discussions (middle management)
- Feedback from team meetings to be reported to EMT

Inter-departmental understanding

- Encourage 'Education' programme of visits to each other's team meetings
- Weekly 'blog' update on a Friday afternoon where departments publish a quick fun summary of events in the week

Context setting

- Strategic briefing for 2007 to review plans for the rest of the year, discuss how different departments work together and review success of past year

All employee meetings

- Produce Council summary document to be circulated prior to meeting
- All employee meetings followed by lunch 12-2pm. Ensure that EMT members circulate and discuss issues

Messaging

- EMT needs to agree and deliver a more consistent line on messages
- Good practice is to agree a monthly set of core messages (*not a script*) that everyone should be aware of
- Retain and develop mini EMT minutes

Celebrating success

- Supply memorable factual evidence, intranet profiles and special awards for 5th anniversary in April

Next Steps

Date	Action
Friday 26 January	Marc to speak at all staff meeting and hand out copies of findings and recommendations
February	VN to attend all team meetings for 'consultation'
Mid March	Report on feedback from all employees to be presented to EMT
End of March	Report available to all employees with actions/recommendations
End of March	Recommendations incorporated into Communications workplan
Friday 18 May	Update from Marc at all staff training day about work done so far and for the rest of the year around better internal communications at HPC