

**Bath and North East Somerset Council**

**BaNES Office Accommodation  
Workplaces Programme**

**New Ways of Working  
Communications Strategy**

**October 2009**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

It has been known that large scale programmes can fail to achieve their objectives due to resistance to change.

One of the factors affecting people's ability to take on board change is lack of communication and information sharing, and lack of staff involvement and participation.

Therefore it is vitally important to keep all stakeholders informed of the changes that are occurring within the programme and how it affects them. Effective communication will be a critical factor in making the workplace transformation project a success. The prime objectives will be to communicate, promote and get buy-in from managers and staff at all levels the overall strategy and in particular to new ways of working and flexible use of space.

## **2.0 Key Objectives of NWoW Communications**

The communications plan has five inter-related strands **that will:**

### **Gather and provide Information**

- Opportunities, hidden factors, informed decisions
- Best practice, experience elsewhere, design decisions
- Business awareness (remembering what the building is for)
- Move details, etc
- Building handbook and data

### **Promote the project**

- Announce/explain to staff, external publicity, removing uncertainty, positive messages
- Progress, awareness, enthusiasm, managing expectations
- Capitalising on change – internal and external

### **Encourage Dialogue**

- Testing assumptions, direction. Obtaining feedback

### **Educate Staff**

- Explaining the opportunities, rules, changes, etc
- What the building offers, how it works

### **Provide Training and Support**

- Learning how to use new tools, equipment, processes, etc.

### **3.0 Joint Approach**

In conjunction with BaNES' wider Transformation Programme communications strategy we would suggest that the following are key factors in positively positioning the project and ensuring maximum buy-in:

- start early
- canvas opinion
- identify potential opportunity and areas of resistance
- involve people and encourage ownership
- integrate training and communications

Key considerations for a successful communications strategy are:

- define the business strategy in clear user-friendly language
- bring the change to life by pointing a picture of the vision
- break down information into bit size chunks and develop a practical timeline of delivery
- encourage buy-in to the change through dialogue and direct involvement.

## 4.0 Communications Audit

A first step in the process of defining and agreeing a communication strategy and plan would be to carry out an audit to:

- find out who know what (this provides a useful benchmark for future evaluation)
- identify current and preferred ways of communicating information in different parts of the business
- look at how staff training is organised – which approaches work best; establish levels of IT literacy and assess how receptive employees will be to new working practices/ culture change training
- identify the key needs/issues/potential barriers to success in different parts of the organisation and think through how these can be addressed
- establish who the key conduits of information are and how comfortable they are communicating the requirements of change to their teams

The results from the above would provide valuable input for developing an integrated training and communication strategy structured around the following headings:

- Objectives:** establish business and communication objectives (focus on employee's perspective)
- Approach** utilise existing effective channels (and assess need for creative new channels) to communicate project development and issues to:
- Build and maintain by support by targeting the right audiences with the right messages
  - Ensure understanding of the rationale for the change in business and people benefit terms
  - Create awareness of the value of new ways of working and advanced IT as enablers of productivity improvement
  - Generate enthusiasm and energy to overcome resistance to change, encourage effective team working and secure project delivery requirements
- Audiences and messages** - who needs to know what and by when.
- Programme** - The workplace communications programme would be an integral part of the wider BaNES communications plan and would target key groups and the wider BaNES audience in line with the key events in the overall project programme.