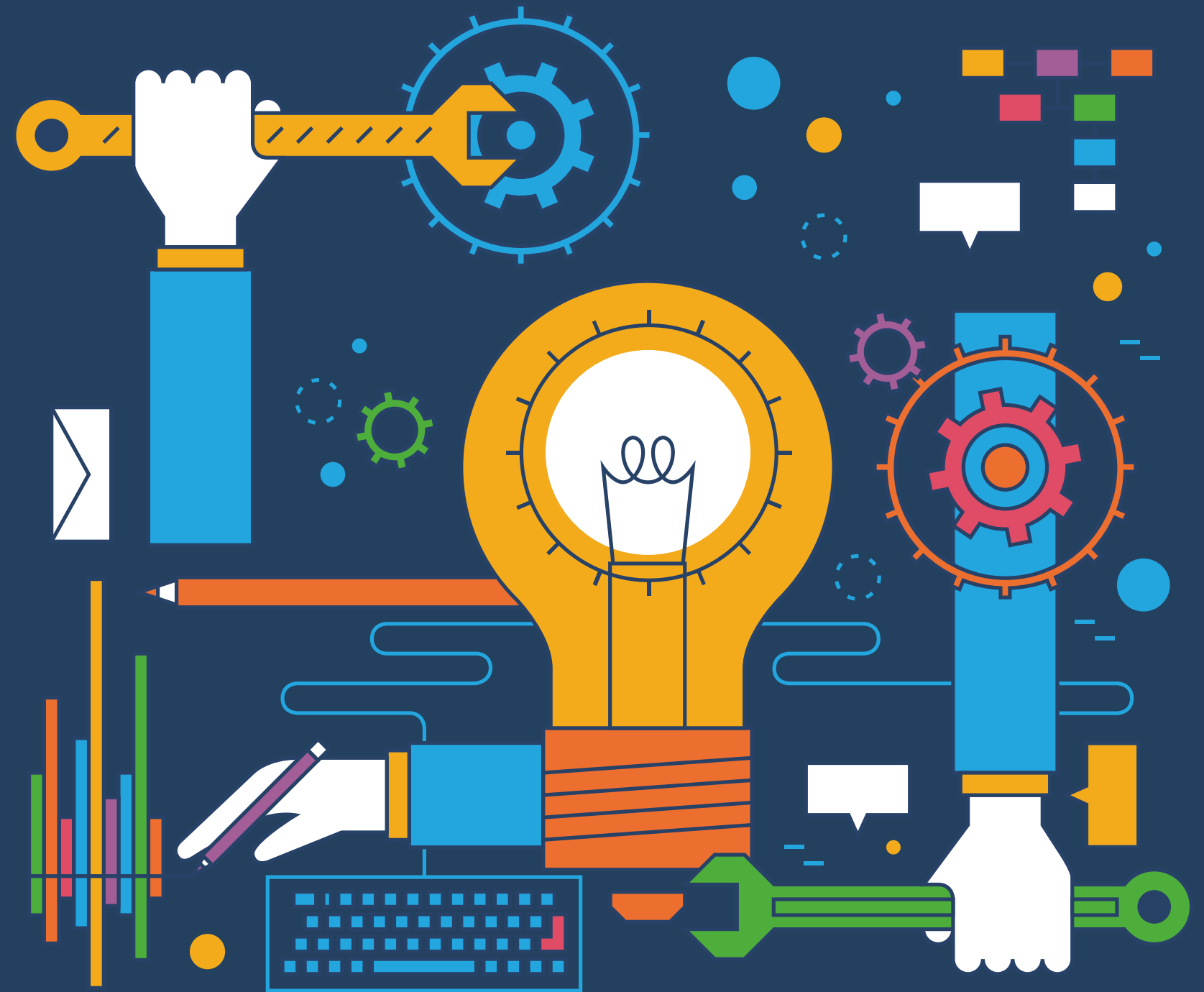




**Learn how to build your internal communications strategy
with campaigns designed to engage and excite your audience**





Hi,

Employee communication can be a minefield — and one that is surprisingly difficult to navigate at times. The dictionary defines communication as “[The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.](#)” It sounds simple, but for many of us making sure that our message is received is harder than you might expect.

I’ve referred to it as a battle before, which might sound a bit strong, but when you consider the amount of media, advertising and general junk our people are bombarded with every day the term really isn’t far off. **We need to find a way to break through the noise barrier and make sure the message we put out is the one that sticks,** above every other email, every other meeting and

every other Tweet they are sent that day. Creating effective employee communications is no small task.

However, as with any great battle, breaking down your challenge into strategic objectives and wins will help you reach your goals. It is my belief that a few simple steps can be utilized to help you on that road to communication success:

- Set your objectives early, so you know what you’re trying to achieve
- Build your messaging around your objectives
- Work out both your strengths and your weaknesses
- Don’t forget the underdogs — your hard to engage employee groups.

Introduction

This book will be your guide to mastering most creative communications programmes designed to tackle any challenge, big or small. Whether it’s a lack of budget, or a disengaged workforce that’s your obstacle, you’ll find the solution in this eBook. I hope you like it and find it as inspiration for your next big communications rollout.

Remember, you can always find me blogging about communication tips and tricks on our Reward Gateway website. I love hearing your stories, so share away!

Best wishes,

Megan Gough

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Building a communications plan

It's exciting to launch a new programme. One that you know will delight and engage your employees — you've done your homework, you've got the leadership team on board and now you're sitting in a room with the team wondering what you've gotten yourself into.

Then, it settles in. That moment of panic: [How are we ever going to pull this off?](#) When it comes to launching a new initiative, we're often so caught up by the logistics of how the operations will actually work we don't think too much further ahead about how we're going to get people to really engage with it.

And why would we? Often the product is the result of evidence from your people that shows this is something they want, so surely the trusty email blast should be enough... right? I can tell you from experience, it's not that easy. To “go into battle,” you need to equip yourself with:

- Why you're trying to reach your audience
- Who your audience is
- What you'll reach them with
- Your follow-up items

First up, the “why.”

Before I start any communications plan I always begin by listing my objectives — what do I really want to achieve with this plan? What do I want people to do with this information?

Objectives could be related to the message you want to convey, but they can also relate to how you want people to feel or what you want them to do. Wherever possible I build my objectives around measurable results so right from the very start I have at least a rough plan of how I’m going to know if the communications have been successful.

After I set the objectives these become the bedrocks of my campaign which I refer back to constantly, and never more importantly than when I’m creating the messaging.” After writing your content take a step back and measure it against your objectives to see how it’s going to get you to your goals. Does it fit the whole profile, or do you need to make any tweaks?

Next, the “who.”

Defining your audience — your employees — is so incredibly important. A couple questions I like to ask our clients:

- Are most of your staff over forty or fresh out of university?
- Is it mostly people at a desk or employees in the field?
- Are you aiming to be formal, casual, exciting, classic or something completely different?

For example if you wanted to go for a more corporate brand the design elements you would use would be more elegant, simple, and more straight to the point. If you wanted to develop something more fun and exciting you would lean more towards elements that include curving lines and lots of colour. It’s important to decide what direction you want to go in and commit to those ideas.

Your audience will define your “what.”

No matter what organisation you work in, you will have different groups of employees who prefer different types of communication and it’s important you make it easy for them to access the information. [I’ve used an expression many times over the years at RG which sums this up nicely: “Go where the eyes are.”](#)

Are your employees tech-savvy, or do they hate email? Is an in-person connection better for them to learn, or would they rather printed materials to review on their own time?

Don’t make your people work to find things out, and ensure you’re putting content in the places they’re already looking. In the case of a new programme launch this might mean following up your email with an [article on the company blog](#) (hello!), adding it to your other social media channels like [Snapchat](#), Twitter or Facebook, or even sending a letter to the home address of really hard to reach employees.

To reduce cost and time affiliated with the repetition of these tasks, make sure you're collecting data points on opens and engagement rates so that you know what avenue reaches the most employees.

You don't have to use every tool in your arsenal, but putting your message out via three key channels is a good rule to live by.

Don't forget to plan how you'll continue to engage.

How often have you deleted an email by mistake, or opened it briefly only to immediately forget it was ever sent? Your core campaign announcements should be relevant and timely messages which are useful to your recipients. And by useful I don't mean informative, I mean [something that they would find genuinely interesting and an advantage to themselves](#). Don't stop at only sending one initial eBlast — follow-ups are expected and appreciated. But make

them relevant and meaningful. A couple ideas:

- [Take your employees on a journey](#) with follow up messages and reminders highlighting how they can use the programme and when.
- [Give them progress reports](#) showing that other people are using the service
- [Link your campaign with other internal happenings](#). Can you add in a line about the campaign in the company newsletter? Liaise with your induction team members and add a slide? Or maybe you can do the outreach yourself and add a simple one-line reminder to your email signature.

After working with our clients for a number of years, I've seen what makes a launch successful, and what pitfalls you can encounter. I hope you'll learn from the next set of our client stories that show truly innovative launch plans that really WOWed.

Create a VIP presence

Ladbrokes reversed downward trend in engagement levels with inventive programme relaunch

Ladbrokes had been a client of Reward Gateway since 2008 but, until 2015, had only focussed on employee discounts. To give employees better access to all of their benefits, the organisation decided to implement Reward Gateway's SmartHub® platform to relaunch their central benefits hub - RewardArena

The key focus of the campaign was to let employees know about the new and improved RewardArena, especially focussing on the responsive nature of the platform, allowing RewardArena to be accessible from anywhere on a smartphone, tablet or laptop. The challenge was that Ladbrokes

have a large population of retail workers and existing communication channels were limited.

Most communications were delivered via a weekly brief — which primarily contained business-critical information — so they struggled to encourage their retail staff to engage with other incentives in the organisation, including employee benefits.

Ladbrokes

Company Name

Ladbrokes

Male: Female Ratio

70:30

Online: Offline

80:20

Average Age

40

Location:

2209 sites across the UK

Sector

Betting & Gaming

No. Employees

14,000

Programme Name

RewardArena

Launch Date

September 2008,
relaunched summer 2015

Programme Remit

Discounts, eCards,
Communications

Rolling out the red carpet pre-launch

They decided to use messaging that would create a feeling of privilege and excitement. Ladbrokes wanted to embrace a theme of sports and events, to tie in with the company's core business, and so the idea of creating an invitation to visit the "new arena" became the focus of the campaign.

Ladbrokes decided to move away from the existing communications channels and utilise digital posters, the staff magazine and team briefings. Digital posters were displayed on TV screens in all locations and also used on their existing intranet to maximise coverage while minimising distribution and production costs.

Pre-launch, all communication channels displayed messages explaining that a new platform was coming soon, such as "RewardArena" is "under construction" and "A new and improved destination for all your benefits is on its way." The launch day itself was promoted with invitations designed to look like tickets for a sporting event, and

this was followed up with discussions in team meetings and promotions in the staff magazine.

The results

Post-launch, the new RewardArena hub became a whole new communications channel for Ladbrokes, meaning they were able to reach their employees in ways they hadn't before. Engagement prior to the launch of RewardArena had dipped, but has now risen again to a healthy 45% — a figure that continues to rise month on month. Ladbrokes are working with Reward Gateway to maintain RewardArena as a core communication tool, with regular updates and new features to keep it fresh.



Ladbrokes used playful language and branded communications to tease their new platform.

Create a (new) brand identity

TfL uses multi-tiered communications strategy with a refreshed identity to re-launch benefits platform and increase engagement with new focus

TfL has 24,000 employees who work across 588 locations in the travel & transport sector. There is a male to female ratio of 77:23, an offline to online ratio of 60:40, and a workforce average age of 43.5.

TfL first launched their myTfL platform on SmartHub® technology back in 2010 with the aim of giving employees a low-cost yet high effect financial benefit. However, significant government funding cuts resulting in a knock-on impact on pay meant the perception of reward was suffering, directly impacting employee engagement. To add to this, employees largely saw base pay as the main

pulling force to their work. So in 2014, TfL began communicating the concept of total reward to move focus away from base pay and promote the wider reward package. Their platform was promoted in the reward statements as integral to the total reward offer, emphasising the significant financial benefits individuals could gain.

To create fresh buzz around the product and savings for employees, TfL decided to relaunch myTfL. But as with its previous launch, the biggest obstacle to a successful relaunch was TfL's unique and difficult communications



Company Name

Transport for London (TfL)

Male: Female Ratio

77:23

Online: Offline

60:40

Average Age

43.5

Location:

Employees split among 588 different locations

Sector

Travel

No. Employees

24,000

Programme Name

MyTfL

Re-launch Date

2014

Programme Remit

Employee discounts, employee engagement platform

challenge, diverse range of roles from head office to underground and bus operations. These employees are largely offline and work in shifts in isolation from their colleagues, without regular access to work emails.

Building the buzz

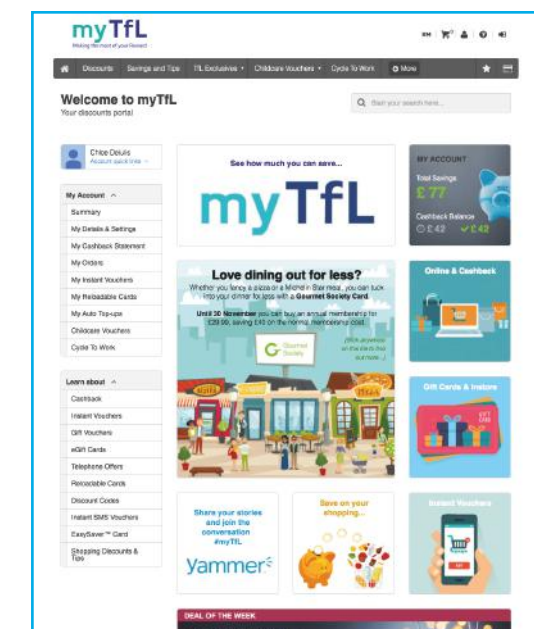
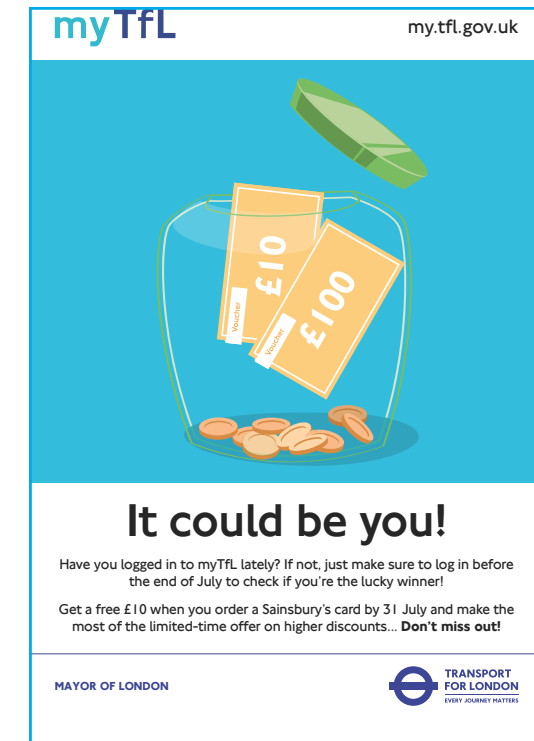
A four-week teaser campaign was designed to promote myTfL, create a buzz about the relaunch and incorporate the relaunch incentives offered. TfL consulted communication experts within in each area of the business to ensure as many employees were reached as possible, at minimal extra cost to the business. Previous communications for myTfL had matched the standard corporate blue but feedback suggested that this meant messages were getting lost in all of the information employees had to digest. Communications were refreshed, opting for bright and bold images which would stand out, be noticed and create a separate benefits brand.

A few days before relaunch, articles went out in

local business unit newsletters, on four intranet sites, and a further company email to all employees. These contained more detail about how there were now even better offers available on the new look myTfL. To make the site easier to use and navigate, the layout of the homepage was simplified showing key messages only, linking through to more detailed information. It was designed to mirror the teaser campaigns so the look and feel was familiar and enticing.

The results

SmartHub® allowed TfL to shape the messages they send to employees, making them more relevant and helping to promote the wider reward package available. In the 12 months since the relaunch, a total spend of £17,000,000 has gone through the platform which is 15.5% higher than the previous, with £1,700,000 of total employees savings which is 8.2% higher. There was a total engagement of 82%, up from 68% in the previous year.



Put your values front and center

Krispy Kreme ensures hub launch reaches offline and online workers with Champions and online channels

For Krispy Kreme, a global retailer of premium-quality coffees and doughnuts, the organisation struggled to unite their 860 employees in more than 20 different locations. The disperse workforce led to lower adoption of benefits and a lack of visibility on important company updates. The company needed a consistent and scalable approach to employee communication aligned with their unique culture and company values.

To help, Krispy Kreme worked with Reward Gateway to centralise their reward and recognition, communications and employee discounts on an employee engagement platform.



Company Name

Krispy Kreme

Male: Female Ratio

40:60

Online: Offline

10:90

Average Age

26

Location:

20+ sites in Australia

Sector

Food Retail

No. Employees

860

Programme Name

The KK Mixer

Launch Date

November 2015

Programme Remit

Employee engagement platform, employee discounts, eCards, reward and recognition

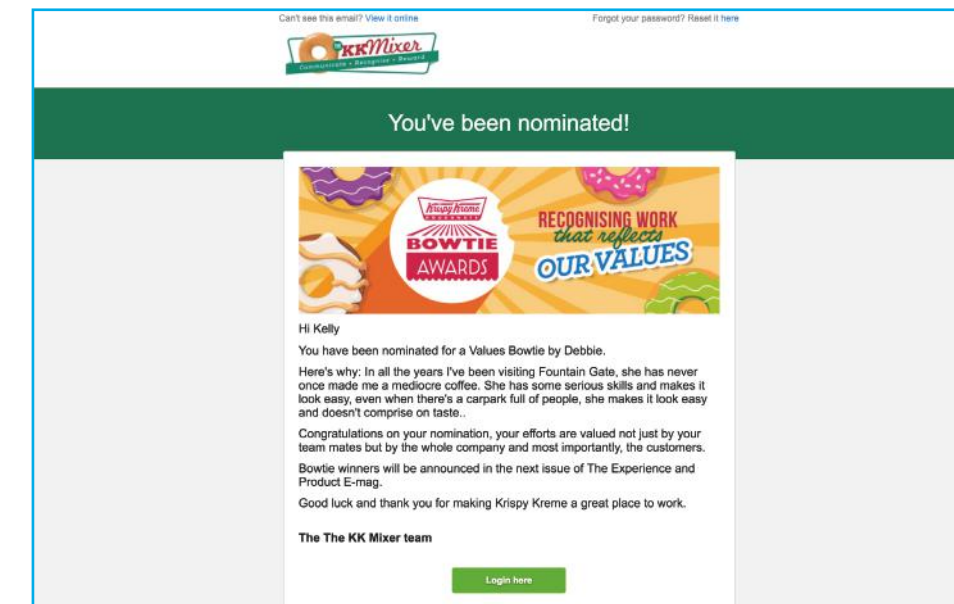
Teaser campaign promises new benefits, builds excitement

With 90% of Krispy Kreme's workforce being offline in retail, manufacturing and distribution, Krispy Kreme worked with Reward gateway to come up with a variety of communications tactics to engage all demographics. An email campaign teased the promise of new, exciting benefits to promote the soon-to-be-launched employee discounts programme. To drive even more engagement, Krispy Kreme held a competition on social media for photos in themed photo booths using the hashtag #TheKKMixer, the name of the new platform.

A team of benefits Champions was created to represent each of the locations with an in-person information session at the Sydney headquarters to show the new platform to employees and to help engage employees from the start. Champions benefitted from early access to The KK Mixer to learn the platform technology and help others.

The results

On launch day, 40% of employees registered with the platform, which has since risen with continued engagement to 78% of all employees registered to access the centralised benefits, communications and reward and recognition hub. To launch branded eCards for the company (part of the recognition tools on the hub), a customised eCard was created and sent to every single employee on behalf of the CEO to encourage employees to activate their account and view the eCard, and then send one in return to their peers.



Conclusion

Great communications are a team effort

Throughout the book we've shared with you some key advice on how to develop your own internal communication strategy, plus some of our favourite employee communication tactics we've helped develop here at Reward Gateway. But these stories are also the result of a lot of hard work by some great teams.

Every campaign is a coordinated effort between the client, their Engagement Manager and the dedicated communication specialists on both sides.

We are fortunate enough to work in an environment which allows us to push the boundaries and not expect the standard as the only choice.

We're always testing out new ideas internally

with great results, like those featured in this book, as well as weeding out the good from the gimmicky. If you'd like to learn more about how improved employee communication can have an effect on your employee engagement just let us know, we'd always love to hear from you.

Here's to better engagement,



Megan Gough

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Reward Gateway delivers employee engagement solutions to more than 1,300 clients worldwide.

Reward Gateway helps make the world a happier place to work by delivering the only Employee Engagement platform with industry-leading employee benefits, reward and recognition, and communication tools all in one place.

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