

A brand that wants to engage with consumers should ensure it first engages with its employees through a shared purpose, vision, mission and a set of values



Nokia N-series: rolled out an internal campaign to help employees learn about the new phone's features

Rally the team

By Joe Panepinto, Jack Morton Worldwide

With the recovery sputtering along, many companies are looking to re-engage a workforce battered by bad news and uncertainty. But connecting to a diverse and often geographically distributed group is going to take more than cupcakes in the kitchen, posters in the hall, and a mouse pad for every desk.

A recent report on the US workforce from ModernSurvey revealed record highs for unengaged and under-engaged employees (70%), and record lows for those who are fully engaged (8%). Not only is that a whole lot of unhappy workers, it's an enormous drain on productivity, innovation and creativity. Unengaged workers just want to get to the end of the day, grab their

paycheck, and put work in the rear view mirror.

How to turn the trend on its head? Short of handing out crisp new 'Benjamins' as people arrive for work in the morning, what can you do to re-energise your workforce, re-engage them, and get them reacquainted with why they work for you in the first place? People need to feel purpose and connection with what they do.

The key is aligning your employees with your company's purpose, mission, vision and values. Today's most successful brands aren't passive logos that sit on a page or screen. Instead, they differentiate themselves by what they do - what the experience is when a client interacts with any of your brand's touchpoints. And a customer or client's path to experiencing your brand often passes directly through your people.

While the rest of the world looks at

brands as nouns, we look at them as verbs. Brands are meant to be experienced - in every channel and medium.

We believe 'experience brands' are built from the inside out - starting with employees and your corporate culture (which for our purposes is simply 'the way things get done around here'). With social media and word-of-mouth marketing a reality of today's workplace, what happens inside is reflected in the way your brand is perceived on the outside.

Rallying the internal team to deliver great experiences these days means focusing on five key guiding principles:

1 Think branding in everything you do

Everything communicates - the stories you tell, the language you use, your dress code and office layout, the things you reward



and recognise. Everyone within the organisation needs consistent, but tailored, messages around what the brand stands for and how that translates into their everyday behaviours. Then those behaviours need to be reinforced in many different ways.

An alignment campaign for Singtel Optus - a challenger telecoms brand in Australia - focused on pouring the 'yes' back into the company. The 'Being Yes' campaign included creative signage, thought-provoking challenges, and most importantly, the roll-out of a new way of measuring the company's commitment to being yes - Net Promoter Score (NPS).

2 Focus on employee alignment as rigorously and creatively as you would consumer experiences

To engage employees, you need to make sure your internal brand-building campaign is not only consistent, but also creatively engaging. Remember - employees are consumers, too, and their expectations around brand experiences are high and based on the experiences they have with other brands. Borrow tactics from marketing (or team up with them) to segment your workforce and create targeted communication plans for each, along with key success metrics that tell

you if you're heading in the right direction.

Johnson & Johnson's Global Marketing Group (GMG) was interested in re-engaging and re-energising thousands of marketing employees and partners around the globe, bringing them cutting-edge ideas, and encouraging collaboration. The challenge - to market to marketers - drew heavily on audience analysis and insights, and ultimately led to the rollout of InsightsOut, an internal communications platform. Beyond standard case studies and newsletters, the platform included entertaining interviews, webinars and behind-the-scenes video series from innovative marketing leaders outside J&J.

3 Don't just focus on Day One

Jack Morton works with clients all the time who focus all of their effort and energy into Day One activities - a global kick-off, inspirational speeches by executive leadership, beautiful videos, decorations and branded apparel or doodads.

Everyone leaves the room stoked and goes back to their desks to return to the same-old same-old. Opportunity wasted. Plan a year's worth of activities and communications so that you are way ahead of the curve and able to maintain the productivity boost that internal alignment campaigns typically bring.

KPMG announced a new global strategy to its 150-country managing partners at its 2010 International Partner's Conference, but that was just the tip of the iceberg. The meeting kicked off a multi-year, political-style 'high-performance culture' campaign that included a stump speech for leaders, message discipline across countries and business units, a dynamic microsite, and a highly interactive 'high-performance culture' digital primer.

4 Target emotional commitment, not just rational understanding

Chip and Dan Heath, in their recent book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*, reinforce the idea that messaging and creative campaigns can change behaviour only if they have both rational and emotional messages. Employees typically move through a cycle that goes like this: knowing - feeling - believing - behaving. The Heaths, who liken the process to an elephant and a rider, emphasise that you need to appeal to the rider rationally,

while coaxing along the elephant emotionally.

How do you engage and unite thousands of hospital employees who range from orderlies and volunteers to surgeons and senior administrators, and are spread across more than 20 campuses? Scott and White, a hospital network in Texas, sought to align employees around a shared sense of the importance of each of their roles in the lives of the patients and families they serve.

'It Matters' - a two-year internal campaign that won PRWeek's Employee Communications Campaign of the Year in 2011 - featured the photos and stories of employees at all levels, showing how what they do matters in the lives of people at their most vulnerable.

5 Immerse and engage, don't just train and communicate

Traditional employee engagement campaigns focus on communication, training and extrinsic motivation (rewards and recognition). Today, the focus is on interacting with employees around creating a shared purpose and involving them in a conversation on 'the way things get done around here'. People are more committed to ideas they helped develop. The goal is to develop a workforce that is internally motivated to deliver great client experiences.

Training is experiencing. So when Nokia rolled out its new N-series phone, we rolled out an internal 'Sharing Adventures' campaign that encouraged employees to use the features of the phone to capture their adventurous sides and share the stills, videos, and stories with each other on a dedicated micro-site. Rather than learn about the features from a dry manual or e-tutorial, we engaged employees to learn by doing.

So, if the plan is to re-engage your employees around your brand's shared purpose, think about it like a consumer campaign. Identify your key messages and audiences. Design a breakthrough creative campaign. Deliver messaging through a comprehensive communication plan over time. Measure as you go along. Remember, experience counts, especially when it comes to developing a customer-focused corporate culture.

more on employee engagement at www.warc.com