

Aviva plc

The insurance group Aviva plc has undertaken a huge engagement challenge as part of its rebranding in the UK from Norwich Union to Aviva. **Helen Jackson**, reward director – Aviva, explains how the business has successfully developed an integrated communications programme to capture the hearts and minds of its employees, while remaining true to its individual recognition ethos

Aviva is the UK's largest insurance group and the business now encompasses Norwich Union Life and Norwich Union Insurance with the UK employee population totalling 28,000. By 2010 this will also include RAC employees.

In an ambitious rebranding exercise the organisation has embarked on a journey towards its new 'One Aviva' brand. With the amalgamation of so many individuals

from different company backgrounds, communicating reward in a consistent, meaningful and, above all, personal way was going to be a major undertaking. We saw this project both as a huge challenge and a great opportunity to engage people with the 'One Aviva' vision.

Working with employee communications consultancy Caburn Hope, we planned and implemented a strategy to engage UK employees with Aviva's new reward offering,

including all aspects of pay and benefits. My Aviva Reward is an integrated, all-employee reward engagement programme which includes an accessible web portal, personalised total reward statements and a supporting communications programme.

Engaging employees

The My Aviva Reward project is playing a key role in the move towards 'One Aviva'. Reward was

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identified very early on as one of six brand proof points in the over-arching corporate strategy, designed to bring the company together to add value to both customers and employees. It presented an excellent opportunity to engage with employees on an individual and meaningful level. We felt that the most personal approach would be to offer an individually tailored reward package.

Aims and challenges

The project's aim was to engage employees with all aspects of the Aviva Reward package including salary, allowances, pension, shares, bonus, benefits, employee discounts, plus a new flexible benefits offering and company-wide recognition scheme. We wanted to ensure people really understood the value of their individual reward package. The team aimed to communicate clearly with people on a personal level in line with our company ethos of treating customers and employees as names, not numbers. The project also needed to help build brand loyalty to the new unified Aviva in line with the over-arching 'One Aviva' strategy, that our CEO Andrew Moss describes as "... bringing [employees] together as one team under a common identity..." Ultimately, we aim to improve ROI and performance through a more engaged workforce, so the project has a big part to play in the wider goals of the organisation.

In order to achieve its aims, My Aviva Reward needed to overcome several challenges. The sheer number of employees from different organisational backgrounds was a huge consideration; we needed to ensure we were bringing the concept of individual recognition to life for each employee in a meaningful way.

We also wanted to build excitement and interest in preparation for the subsequent launch of our flexible benefits scheme. Finally, we needed to obtain buy-in from key stakeholders on the need to communicate the reward offering.

Logistics

Aviva enjoys a diverse workforce with 57,000 employees worldwide and the scope and scale of targeting the company's 28,000 UK-based employees, from frontline to CEO level, on an individual basis is considerable. The employee population is a mixture of easy- and hard-to-reach workers, including office-based, field-based and call centre employees. The UK operation is split across numerous sites in the UK including offices in London, Norwich, York, Eastleigh and Sheffield. Each organisation within the new Aviva UK was historically offered a different reward package and each adopted a different approach to communicating it – so a completely joined-up, cohesive approach was essential.

Strategy

We began work on the project in June 2008 and in August that same year we established an engaging new reward brand that clearly showed reward as a stand-alone entity within Aviva. This brand was rolled out across a universally accessible web portal and total reward statements which were both launched in February 2009.

It was a huge change for us to have a website providing an employee gateway to all the information employees need to make an educated decision about their benefits package and understand the value of their

reward. We have made sure that delivery is consistent across all employees at all levels and to ensure the user is drawn in through dynamic imagery and a tone of voice that puts the employee comfortably in control. My Aviva Reward guides users through web and intranet-based content, supporting them every step of the way.

One of our original concerns was how we could give employees more control and ownership of their reward package. We decided to introduce a flexible benefits scheme, launched in July 2009, enabling employees to shape their own reward. We also decided to provide personalised reward statements. Following a secure log-in procedure, the employee is greeted by name and can see a completely clear overall picture of their benefits. The statement is updated monthly and is the first time Aviva employees have been able to access this information online from either work or home.

One of the best decisions we made was to place engagement at the centre of our strategy from the outset. It remains a key driver post-launch and provides an excellent focus for work on this project. Integration with the company's business transformation vision, meant we also remained strongly committed to clarity of purpose and shared understanding throughout the strategy.

Communications

No matter how fantastic the portal and reward statements looked, we knew we couldn't launch them without the supporting communications. We decided to launch the programme to employees using a range of communicative

Aviva key learning points

- Set up as many channels for valuable feedback as possible early on so those who had input can champion the project later. This should include groups such as employee representative bodies as well as HR people and high level stakeholders.
- Keep pushing the message – put a communications plan in place to cover the project pre-launch to build excitement, and mid- and post-launch to maintain communications momentum. Use a wide range of communications tactics to get your message across.
- Placing a core aim at the centre of your strategy, in this case engagement, helps maintain focus.
- See the project as part of a far-reaching vision and be clear about where it fits into the organisation's overall strategy.

tactics in a bid to build excitement beforehand. This included profiling in 'One Aviva' brand events across the country, manager briefing packs, the CEO monthly message and Team Talk, brand showcases, branded emails,

intranet banner ads, intranet articles, online HR FAQs, payslip messages and individual PIN letters to employees.

Results

Our strategy paid off. Within one month of the website going live, more than a third of employees had logged on to view their personal reward statements overall. We were delighted with this result which indicated the value of a personalised approach. We have had extremely good feedback internally and some senior executives were reported to be 'blown away' by the website's functionality, look and feel. Employees have recognised it as 'a major step forward'. We have also had excellent input and feedback throughout the project from Aviva's employee representative body, which has offered to champion the scheme.

Learnings

We have really seen the impact of having several different channels for feedback. The support from high-level stakeholders has meant the project has been championed across all areas of the business. Getting our employee representative body on board in the early stages was essential and something I would recommend to any organisation. Their ongoing feedback is proving an excellent measuring tool as we assess the impact of the project. We also continue to invite comments from HR and people managers, gather responses and

queries from the 'Ask HR' area of our intranet, and have placed a feedback form on the reward statement pages for user comments. We have also had positive unsolicited comments from employees through other 'business as usual' communications channels.

Further, we have found considerable value in continually pushing the My Aviva Reward message, pre-, mid- and post-launch. Developing the scheme as part of a far-reaching vision towards 'One Aviva' has ensured we have maintained communications momentum.

Diane Mangan, head of internal communications at Aviva, explains: "Reward was identified very early on as one of six brand proof points for the One Aviva strategy. Communicating the Aviva Reward package presented an excellent opportunity to engage with employees on an individual and meaningful level. Caburn Hope helped us build excitement and engagement using consistent, targeted messages across a wide range of communications."

We transformed our business strategy into a coherent programme of activity and I have been impressed by the hugely positive impact it is already making on our workforce. It has been an opportunity to capture hearts and minds to achieve maximum employee buy-in, not just provide information about our offering on a transactional level. I feel we have truly embraced this as an organisation. ■

