



## Canal & River Trust - Growing our Trust

### Background

Until July 2012 British Waterways was the public corporation that cared for the 2,200-mile network of canals and rivers in England, Scotland and Wales.

In 2012 the Government transferred the corporation into a new charitable body, the Canal & River Trust. This involved a significant change programme which included:

- Structural changes
- A focus to deliver better customer service
- A plan to operate more efficiently

### The challenge

People Lab were tasked with developing and delivering an internal communications and engagement strategy, to help embed these changes as well as supporting their 10-year strategic vision: **'living waterways, transform places and enrich lives'**.

### The solution

To deliver culture change through the 'Growing Our Trust' (GoT) programme; the creative platform from which the internal communications and engagement strategy would be developed. The objectives agreed with the Trust were:

1. To develop awareness and understanding of GoT
2. To generate buy-in and commitment to GoT
3. To drive and support the behaviour changes required to make GoT a success

### How?

At the outset, stakeholder analysis was undertaken to understand each audiences' drivers – this was critical to ensure intellectual and emotional buy-in in order to meet the objectives. Workshops were then conducted with the Trust's project team in order to produce a stakeholder map from which tactics would be based.

Against each stakeholder group we considered what we wanted them to think, feel, believe and do as a result of our communications approach and used this to plan the campaign accordingly.

This analysis informed the subsequent communications strategy of 'empowering and enabling employees to understand, believe and be part of GoT'. It was clear that an employee-led strategy was required.

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## Introducing People Champions

The recruitment and utilisation of 'People Champions' was central to the success of the strategy. By adopting an innovative viral change approach, they were to be the face of GoT and key communicators of the programme.

Drawn from across the Trust and in accordance with a specified role specification, notable elements of the programme were as follows:

- Recruitment process served as a means of introducing GoT to the organisation
- 56 sign-ups; with representation from every location and division
- Induction workshops and development days to help upskill
- Recruited champions featured on dedicated intranet pages as well as via poster campaign across Trust sites
- Champions were prepared and tasked with running a series of x13 face to face workshops for all employees across the Trust
- Yammer group was set up to encourage a Champions community, discussion and collaboration in the run up to the all employee workshops. It also served as a useful feedback channel.
- A two-day development workshop prepared the Champions for their role. During these sessions, Champions designed their Champion manifesto and designed the all-employee workshops.

Once the Champions were ready, 13 all-employee workshops were held across two locations. Designed by People Lab, the sessions were introduced and concluded by Richard Parry (CEO), but the People Champions had responsibility for leading them.

Using a strength-based approach, colleagues were asked to consider what is good about working at the Trust, think about the future, and to consider the gap between the Trust today and the future vision. Creative aspects to the workshops included:

- A card-sort activity to collate feedback and used as a visual
- Attendees produced a short film to communicate the future of the trust. A few of the films were then selected to play within the event and shared via a GoT microsite
- Each colleague completed a pledge card which was posted back to them after their workshop as a reminder of what they have committed to differently.

The next stage of their development is planned to focus on their coaching skills.

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### Additional tactics included:

Animated video to launch GoT

- **Monthly core brief:** a monthly core-brief which provided managers with tools and talking points and films to enable them to have a monthly face-to-face team talk.
- **Utilisation of existing channels:** Channels such as the internal newspaper 'The Source', dedicated pages on the intranet, weekly email updates focused on explaining the rationale of GoT and recruitment of people champions.
- **Development of five workstreams:** Each with an executive sponsor, People Champion and employee, to tackle the key themes and issues which emerged out of the workshops.
- **Toolkit:** Launch of a line manager toolkit to enable line managers to have ongoing conversations with their teams regarding ways in which they can take personal accountability and ownership to continue to grow the Trust.
- **Continued work with people champions:** Champions continue to play a pivotal part in the success of GoT. From attending local meetings to running focus groups and providing feedback to the project team.

### Results

Measurement was a critical component of the programme. Each objective set clearly defined measurement criteria, designed to measure impact against the engagement curve.

- 94% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I understand what GoT is all about'
- 91% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I could explain GoT to a colleague'
- 91% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I believe the focus on GoT is right for our organisation''
- 87% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I understand how GOT affects me'
- 84% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I am able to contribute to changes happening in the Trust'
- 73% either agreed or strongly agreed with: 'I regularly take action to help ensure GoT is a success''