

case study

AMP Financial Services

Major change programme

When international financial services company AMP was looking to implement a major cost management programme resulting in 1,500 redundancies and the closure of a major UK office, a carefully-planned, strategic communication programme was a vital piece of the jigsaw.

The communication challenge was to position the cost management programme as a planned strategic move for the organisation and to limit any negative impact on AMP's investors, customers, strategic partners and employees.

Athene's approach

Athene's consultants, then working in-house as part of AMP's communications team, established a cross-business communications project team to manage the announcement in a three stage process – firstly, setting the scene and establishing the strategic need for cost management; secondly, making the announcement itself, and lastly delivering a co-ordinated information programme to keep audiences up to date on progress and build employee motivation.

Audiences for the announcement included financial analysts, investors, media, MPs, the Financial Services Authority (FSA), employees, trade union, financial intermediaries, customers, key suppliers and business partners. The number of different audiences with differing needs necessitated the formulation of a detailed communication strategy, tight adherence to a core set of key messages and close co-ordination of all materials.

Throughout the programme, a number of different communication media were used including posters, plasma screens, newsletters, face-to-face briefings, roadshows, Q&As, press releases and personal letters. A feedback database was also established to manage and answer employees' questions.



Results

Balanced reporting and a positive follow-up article was secured in the main local paper carrying all the key messages that had been established for the programme. In an employee engagement survey conducted just three months after the main announcement, 70% of the organisation's employees said that they understood the reasons for cost management and 75% said that information about the changes had been communicated clearly and consistently.



The communications team subsequently received an award of excellence for change communication from the National Association of Communicators in Business (CiB). An extract from the judges' comments is given below.

"The execution was entirely consistent with the chosen communications strategy and it cannot be faulted. The fact that the local evening newspaper headlined its coverage of the announcement with a key campaign message attests to some adroit media handling. The setting out of primary and secondary messages, outlining of key risks and issues, together with the chosen mitigation and resulting implementation plan, are a model which others could very usefully follow."

Judging Panel
Communicators in Business Awards

