



CASE STUDY



STRATEGIC INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC RELATIONS INSTITUTE OF NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL WINNER: BEST INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

THE CLIENT

Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited is a New Zealand multinational dairy co-operative owned by around 10,500 New Zealand farmers and staffed by 22,000 employees globally.

THE CHALLENGE

A senior leader at Fonterra got in touch to discuss whether it was possible for communications to improve employees' sense of ownership and investment into the company's strategy.

Fonterra's employee engagement survey indicated that, for a number of years, staff's sense of connection between the mission and purpose of the company, and their jobs, had plateaued.

Employees felt disconnected, believing the strategy to be the responsibility of senior leadership to deliver, not something within their control.

OUR APPROACH

Using internal communications, engaging conversations and positive psychology techniques, we set out to reconnect Fonterra's people with its purpose.

Critical internal and external research shaped the communications strategy. This research guided the development of a series of specific, measurable objectives.



The strategy followed a four-point framework, which is recognised internationally as a best-practice benchmark in strategic communications:

- 1) Management visibility.
- 2) Message congruence
- 3) Opportunities for questions and dialogue.
- 4) Reinforcement and feedback.

The application of positive psychology practice shaped the content and mechanics of our communication recommendations.

Working closely with the client we designed, built and implemented creative elements such as games, puzzles, quiz sessions, positive psychology-based discussion groups, video diaries, intranet sites and a unique piece of collateral called a Chat Map.

All communications were structured and strategic, following a detailed tactical plan spanning 18 months. Every communication was measured for success and reported back to Management to track progress and adjust as needed.

THE RESULT

Our target of reaching 70% “agree or higher” against all objectives was achieved. The average score was 87% “agree or higher”. Results held steady during months of inactivity.

Over 60% of stakeholders chose regularly, without incentive, to provide feedback.

Results against our two overarching communication objectives demonstrated significant achievement, smashing past the plateau:

- Q1 objective: “I understand our strategy” moved from 3.2 to 4.5 out of 5.
- Q2 objective: “I have taken opportunities to get involved in the strategy” rocketed from 2.9 to 4.5 out of 5.

Follow-up research also showed employees not only understood the strategy but they took personal responsibility for the actions within their control.