

Corporate Communications Restructure

Overview

The review and re-structure of a corporate communications function for a global financial institution, in order to better align regional services with strategic business priorities.

The Challenge

Our client, a world leader in the financial services sector, had recently implemented a new global strategy that changed the way services were being delivered across numerous regions. In one of their largest regions, they recognised that the communications function was outdated and still strongly connected to the needs of the old business and strategy. Most of the employees in this region had worked under the old business strategy for many years and still felt attached to it, both emotionally and culturally.

Our client wanted to ensure this regional communications function was restructured to align with the global (or group) level and the new global business priorities. With the business located in France, our client needed a consultancy that had multi-lingual capabilities and were sensitive to the cultural differences.

Therefore, Able and How were requested to review the communications function and provide recommendations for a new streamlined structure that matched the needs of the business.

What we did

Using a proven Able and How designed process, the first step involved a detailed internal audit to generate new information of the current situation. We also used this to assess the desired future state, taking into account both global and regional priorities. All internal and external stakeholders involved in the restructure were taken into consideration. We also examined any potential barriers to change.

With all this data in hand, we looked at possible options. We brought in external case studies and did some benchmark research as part of the process.

Once the key areas of activity had been determined for the future business, an assessment was conducted to determine the capabilities required to deliver them. This information was helpful in creating several 'strawmen' designs of how the new communications function could operate. However, consideration was made toward what worked well in the organisation and what was already adding value to make sure it remained in the new structure.

The final stage of the process involved the review of the entire communications function and the roles employees performed. To do this, Able and How conducted interviews and focus groups with communications employees and reviewed how their skills and experience would fit into a new structure. Throughout this process an open and transparent approach was maintained to ensure employees were well informed and understood what the changes would mean for them. Their preferences and needs were considered alongside those of the organisation, and their feedback and suggestions were encouraged throughout the process.

The result

Able and How made recommendations for a new, more efficient corporate communications structure, which was strategically aligned to business priorities. A plan of gradual change was also drafted, broken down into stages. This was to ensure successful implementation. The proposals and recommendations were readily accepted and implemented by the senior management team. A further recommendations was made to continue such a transition at the group level.

Furthermore, the recommendations were designed in a way that increased efficiency but did not reduce employee headcount. In areas where services were streamlined, talented employees were offered positions

that they had expressed an interest in. This also allowed the region to offer support to the parent group functions, as they were in need of talented employees from regional areas to increase interaction between business units and countries.

Since the implementation of the changes began, feedback from the communications team regarding the changes has been positive and supportive. Those affected by the change were continuously consulted and supported to ensure that employee morale remained positive and business continued as usual.