

# Outstanding employee engagement strategy

## Winner

# United Learning Trust



The first step in measuring engagement at an organisation: get employees to actually fill out your survey. But this can be easier said than done, and of course something of a Catch 22 situation if morale is low.

This was the challenge faced by the United Learning Trust in 2011. The trust is a group of nearly 60 schools that employs more than 6,000 staff (back in 2011 it had around 30 schools with 4,500 staff).

An employee engagement survey in 2011 attracted response rate of just 46%

and demonstrated significant concerns about levels of engagement as well as mistrust about the survey itself. So the HR team identified 'staff survey ambassadors' in each of United's then 31 schools, responsible for managing the survey and local action planning. It branded the campaign 'Learning from You'; the school leaders took the survey seriously and heavily promoted it to their staff, achieving a leap in response rates to 70% by 2013.

The charity rolled out further initiatives. Its annual induction conference 'The Best in Everyone' became a key vehicle and internal comms were overhauled, with bulletin open and click rates closely tracked.

The organisation launched a new 'refer a friend' scheme where staff are paid £500 if they successfully refer a good or outstanding teacher, conducted an evidence-based review of its CPD approach, and strengthened its talent management approach to develop a pool

## Finalists

**Anchor**

**Covéa Insurance**

**HSBC**

**London Overground Rail Operations Limited**

**My Home Move**

**Version 1**

**Wales & West Utilities**

## Highly commended

### Durham Constabulary

Reducing theft from motor vehicles, criminal damage and arson, and increasing victim satisfaction, community confidence and detection rates is no mean feat for a police force during severe public sector cuts. And yet this is exactly what Durham Constabulary has achieved. And it puts these wider wins for the force and its community in no small part down to its exemplary employee engagement strategy.

The organisation has been keen to turn austerity into an opportunity to identify opportunities to do things differently and to get better. One strong example is internal communications. Durham had previously discontinued its in-house newspaper to save money. But the staff survey showed this was an important information tool and so Copperplate was resurrected in 2015. Durham also introduced monthly blogs by members of the force executive to get across key messages.

The organisation also created wellbeing champions among its force to engage with staff on 'the little things' that are important to them.

of leaders for headteacher roles.

The results have been highly impressive. Despite 2013 to 2015 being a period of rapid growth, with significant TUPE activity, engagement remained consistent; 82% of teachers now had a personal development record, compared with 75% in 2014; 74% of teachers said they had helpful feedback at work, compared with 68% in 2014; and 71% said their development was supported by their school, compared with 65% in 2014.

Absence was reduced from nearly 10 days per employee in 2012 to 7.9 days in 2015. Added to this is the £200,000 per annum now being saved through a more internal, talent-development approach to senior recruitment.

Most significantly perhaps, the schools' Ofsted ratings have improved considerably, with the majority now rated 'Good.'

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