

Leading *transformation* award

Winner BBC

Established almost 100 years ago, the BBC has grown from just one radio station to multiple stations on radio and TV, producing hundreds of shows each year, a 24/7 news output, digital offering, an educational offering and much more. Today though it is facing unprecedented times.

Amazon Prime, Netflix and the like have transformed the global media industry and ramped up competition for talent and rights, not to mention viewers. Meanwhile, the new government charter requires the BBC to put out to tender almost all its programmes by 2027, meaning the pressure is on to produce its content with other, more modern production companies.

Yet, in many ways, the BBC was until a few years ago still stuck in the past. As new areas had been set up over the years, a devolved approach had been taken to industrial relations, resulting in local agreements across different departments – some dating back to the 1970s – and widespread inconsistencies and unfairness across the organisation. There was also an outdated approach to flexibility, all of which was having a knock-on effect on employee relations, with individual grievances and local union disputes on the rise and staff survey results voicing this unfairness.

In 2016, HR decided to act, embarking on a modernisation plan to transform terms and conditions and culture across the organisation. What followed next was the biggest change to terms and ways of working in the BBC's recent history.

Key to this transformation being a success was HR's decision to approach the unions to work together to jointly develop new working practices. This led to the



launch of four joint working groups responsible for developing proposals in their areas: contracts of employment; employment policies and allowances; pay and grading; and scheduling and working patterns. Proposed changes on pay and grading included simplifying and standardising roles and career paths, implementing a simpler, fairer pay and grading system, and increasing minimum wage.

HR and the unions then took an innovative and consultative approach to communicating the proposals to the workforce. More than 100 roadshows involving HR, leaders and union general secretaries were held across the UK to communicate and gather feedback from

employees, while an internal online tool (called People View Panels) was developed to show what the proposals meant for individual employee's finances. Changes were made based on feedback and negotiations before, after two years of working in partnership with the unions, the proposals

were put to ballot and union members voted to approve them. One judge was especially "blown away" by this historic achievement, noting "you don't usually get through with a first ballot attempt".

The work wasn't over with this result though. And neither was the collaboration with unions, with a joint Central Scheduling Group set up to oversee implementation of scheduling arrangements and ensure both the spirit and the letter of the policies were implemented properly.

Pay and grading changes were prioritised and within six weeks of the ballot result all employees' pay had increased accordingly – no small feat. Two weeks later came the processes for enhancements for sick pay, pay progression, shared parental leave and paternity leave, followed by the new flexible working policy and new contract with harmonised notice periods and rules on fixed-term contracts.

The change is ongoing, with the full implementation anticipated by August 2019.

Judges were blown away by HR's "bold" approach. As one commented: "As consumers of the BBC, it's in the public eye and it's political, so making change happen in this type of organisation is challenging. Then to do it at pace and with this enormity, you have to bow down to them."

Shortlisted

Allied Irish Bank UK

BP

Deutsche Bank

Network Homes

Southern Co-op

The Metropolitan Police Service

West Dunbartonshire Council