

Most effective use of internal communications

Winner Superdrug

Superdrug is known for trying to invoke that ‘Superdrug feeling’ in every customer – a personal sensation of feeling welcome and included. But why should the customers have all the fun? The Hub is the chain’s innovative two-way internal communication tool, designed to give that experience to its employees too.

The Hub is something of a mix between Twitter and Facebook, populated with material generated by users. Employees post comments, questions, quotes, information about new product lines, and PR material for others to comment on and ‘like’. A number of ‘levels’, which employees can progress to, form part of The Hub. Participants are also able to offer congratulations to those moving up a level.

Constructive feedback is encouraged. For example, head office might request comments and reaction to new packaging for a beauty product. In this way workers feel connected to the business and part of the bigger picture.

Linking professional people in an informal way has created a learning and social aspect among Superdrug’s employees too. There have been many examples of staff members learning from colleagues who have then become friends. For those travelling to a training course at the other end of the country, The Hub can connect participants with each other prior to meeting; some even travel together. There have also been instances of employees from all over the country meeting up to celebrate birthdays.

But The Hub is more than just an app to connect employees. Although it

is fun, it has a serious side: an online learning system, which offers a wide range of personal and professional training programmes and modules, available to everyone – from sales advisers to senior managers. Thought-provoking videos, interactive quizzes, and easy to follow training sessions have all contributed to its success, with more than 150,000 online courses having been completed since the launch.

Superdrug also drives awareness of its corporate social responsibility programmes through The Hub for nominated charity Marie Curie. Employees can share photos of their fundraising efforts and raise awareness of upcoming events. More than £2.7 million has been raised for the terminal illness charity so far.

The staff love The Hub. Of the firm’s 14,000 employees, 10,000 engage regularly, 6,000 have installed the app on at least one device, and there is an average of 4,500 users each month. The Hub has been visited more than 250,000 times since its launch in October, content has been



viewed over 3.2 million times and liked more than 300,000 times, and in excess of 10,000 posts have been created by users.

However, it has had a different impact on different individuals. For some the abilities to share product knowledge, offer feedback on various elements of the business, and learn via the online learning facility have been the most important aspects. For others being able to connect with the company informally and socially has enabled them to develop their skills and competencies. Either way The Hub has provided – for all – a sense of belonging.

“The launch of The Hub has far exceeded my wildest dreams,” said CEO Peter Macnab. “To be able to reach out to more than 10,000 of our colleagues and have an instant reaction back is an absolute dream. The interaction of our colleagues with each other and with our customers is fundamental to the success of Superdrug going forward.”

The judges were impressed with The Hub’s innovative approach, praising the ambitious use of technology and the clear vision of the project. They noted that it is still young, having only been running for six months at the time of judging. As such they have high hopes for the future of the project and wish Superdrug and The Hub every success.

Shortlisted

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The University of Sheffield