

# National Grid

## CEO communication planning

### Background and challenge

National Grid is one of the world's leading energy utility companies with significant Transmission and Distribution operations in the UK and USA. In January 2006, the company announced that Steve Holliday would succeed Roger Urwin as CEO and later that year, announced some fundamental changes to its strategy. To provide the incoming CEO with a platform to communicate his priorities and explain the rationale and impact of this new strategy, Steve Holliday asked for an internal communication strategy and plan. The company approached Ibis Communication to undertake this work.



### Approach

Other than some general questions in the staff survey, National Grid had not previously undertaken an extensive internal communication audit so had only anecdotal evidence of how it was perceived or might be improved. Learning more about both provided us with our first priority.

To gather this insight, we undertook a series of interviews with senior managers and focus groups with other managers and staff across all major sites in the UK and USA. As well as exploring current perceptions of internal communication, we also used this opportunity to test ideas and appetite for CEO communication so we could return with hard evidence to support our recommendations.

Having presented the results of the audit to various stakeholder groups, including the top 200 managers at the annual leadership conference, we used the insight to develop the CEO internal communication strategy and plan.

### Results

The CEO communication plan is currently being implemented alongside various other post-audit recommendations. The company is yet to undertake a further staff survey to assess the impact of these changes but anecdotal evidence suggests that understanding of the new strategy and the profile of the new CEO amongst key audiences are both higher than before.



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