

CERN COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE

James Gillies, ACCU, 7 June 2016. Based on a presentation from Proof Communication to IR-ECO on 26 May 2016



Project overview

1. Research phase ✓
2. Audience research report ✓
3. Internal communications plan ✓
4. External communications strategy **Finalising this month**

Key findings

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Bulletin

- Need more distinction for 'need-to-know' content
- Demand for content closer to real-time and ability to tailor by interest
- Email notification positive but needs improvement
- Content not always suitable for audiences
- Archive difficult to navigate

Website

- The Directory is treated as an intranet, but there is not enough consistency in content
- Confusion as to the role of CERN People pages and online Bulletin

Noticeboards and information screens

- Under-used. Could be more, and potentially larger, screens in hot spot areas.
- Would benefit from a rolling feed and could link to Bulletin content
- Confusion as to the process of contributing information

Social media

- Not a primary channel for internal communication

Consumption of information: CERN users

New users

- 43% of those surveyed reported that they did not feel very well informed about working at CERN and staying the local area

- The type of information most important to receive:
 1. Accommodation
 2. CERN access information
 3. Transport information
 4. Health and safety information
 5. Updates on research at CERN
 6. News about forthcoming CERN events and seminars

Consumption of information: CERN users

Current and returning users

- The Courier is more widely read than the Bulletin
- Over half of all users surveyed never read the print Bulletin, and only 14% read it more than six times a year
- The main way users currently receive information about CERN while working there are:
 1. Email
 2. Word of mouth
 3. The CERN website
 4. Notice boards, posters or screens on site
- The most important types of information for users to receive are:
 1. News about events and seminars happening at CERN
 2. Official CERN news (such as operational dates etc.)
 3. Updates on CERN research
- Going forward, email was significantly the most popular channel for receiving all types of information, followed by notice boards, posters and display screens in most instances
- The majority would like to be able to tailor the type of information they receive

Consumption of information: CERN staff

Staff

It was suggested that internal communications should ultimately perform two core functions:

- 1. To create a sense of community**
- 2. To make individuals' lives easier**

- Currently a lot of information is shared informally, by word of mouth
- Information about anything impacting local traffic was a significant priority
- Demand for non-scientists to hear about research in an accessible way
- 'Big Brother' perception of central communications
- Content demand:
 - The work of different departments
 - Satellite activities such as hackathons
 - What's going on in the local community
 - 'Big picture' at CERN

External communication considerations

External communications – additional research



- EPPCN questionnaire responses
- Interviews with senior members of the science community
- CERN directorate and communications team
- Desktop research
- Meetings with local stakeholder groups

Objectives



- Help to ensure the long term future of CERN and its ambitious future projects
- Secure current members and attract new ones
- Be a non-politicised advocate for science
- Build further links with industry

The heart of the matter

Overall Comment

- CERN's dissemination of science results and its networks for doing so generally work well. This should be supported and maintained.
- CERN is first and foremost a fundamental research facility...
- However extra capacity should be added to develop and disseminate content that talks more about CERN's impact on everyday life and the economic impact of the people it trains and businesses it supports

Challenges and solutions

- A lot of people communicate about CERN and on its behalf.

This must be embraced but there must be at least clear direction, guidelines and policies from the centre

- CERN by its very nature is ambitious and even some within the community think its proposals are unrealistic in terms of future funding

Be stronger in disseminating the utilitarian impact of CERN alongside (not instead of) its contribution to fundamental science

- CERN has finite central resource for communication – a lot of which is taken up by reacting to requests, firefighting and disseminating science results

Add extra capacity for proactive campaigns, enable networks and encourage member states to install communicators in-house

Draft positioning

Current Positioning:

CERN is a unique place where fundamental research unites people from all over the world to push the frontiers of science

Draft New Positioning:

Scientists at CERN make discoveries that explain the nature of the universe and transform our everyday lives

Top line strategic communications recommendations and findings

- New “impact” campaign content should be developed to influence policy makers and general public
- The EPPCN and Interactions networks work well – they should be maintained
- The policy of welcoming media to visit CERN should be maintained despite the fact it is a drain on the resources of the press team
- Where possible the existence of “in-house” communication officers from member countries works well

Top line strategic communications recommendations and findings

- We should strive for the best co-ordination between CERN communications and the experiments
- More effort should be made to create bespoke content for policymakers
- CERN has a relatively large social media following. More effort should be made to take advantage of this by creating more shareable content in terms of info graphics, video etc.
- CERN website should be changed so that CERN People is external facing – highlighting the activities of people at CERN.
- myBulletin should be used as bespoke internal comms

