

Project Title

'Open Up To Social Media'

Category:

Internal Communications

Client Company:

National Grid

Design Consultancy:

WPA Pinfold

Date:

23.07.12

The skill we value most in the people at WPA Pinfold is their ability to demonstrate that they understand our business, our culture and our employee base. This has made the creative process a much simpler one for all, because we are all starting from the same point and can talk the same language.'

Geraldine Mapp

National Grid – Corporate Functions Senior Business Partner, Employee Comms & Media Relations, Corporate Affairs



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'Open Up To Social Media'

National Grid has approximately 27,000 employees, 64% of whom are based in the US and 36% in the UK. Around 15,000 employees are office-based and have access to Internet and email facilities. Opening up social media to all employees attracted massive levels of nervousness, particularly from their HR and Legal teams, who were concerned about the level of potential negative online behaviour that may ensue and the potential breaches to policy which could be detrimental to the brand reputation.

To ensure the campaign delivered an outcome of zero breaches to policy, the communications needed to be impactful and meaningful. This meant that there needed to be a fresh approach to reflect National Grid's aspiration of being modern, relevant, and in-touch with what their employees and managers were thinking.

A robust educational campaign and clear guidance material was required to help employees understand acceptable online behaviour. There was a requirement to connect emotionally with employees and translate policy and process in a way that was informative and engaging.

We created two animated online social media campaigns – targeted at both employees and leaders – to explain the benefits of social media within their roles, helping them engage with the external world and supporting employees who want to build relationships with stakeholders and customers. We also delivered a navigable menu so that scenarios could be viewed by job description/profile.

The launch was a resounding success with an immediate 'buy in' from employees. This was a watershed in online internal communications, with National Grid receiving record hits and spontaneous emails from employees complimenting the creative campaign. The campaign has had a significant impact on both National Grid's social media usage and the understanding of the policies.

To view the online animated campaigns please visit:
<http://vimeo.com/30680792>
<http://vimeo.com/30724883>



Leaders awareness animated campaign: start screen



Employee awareness animated campaign: menu screen

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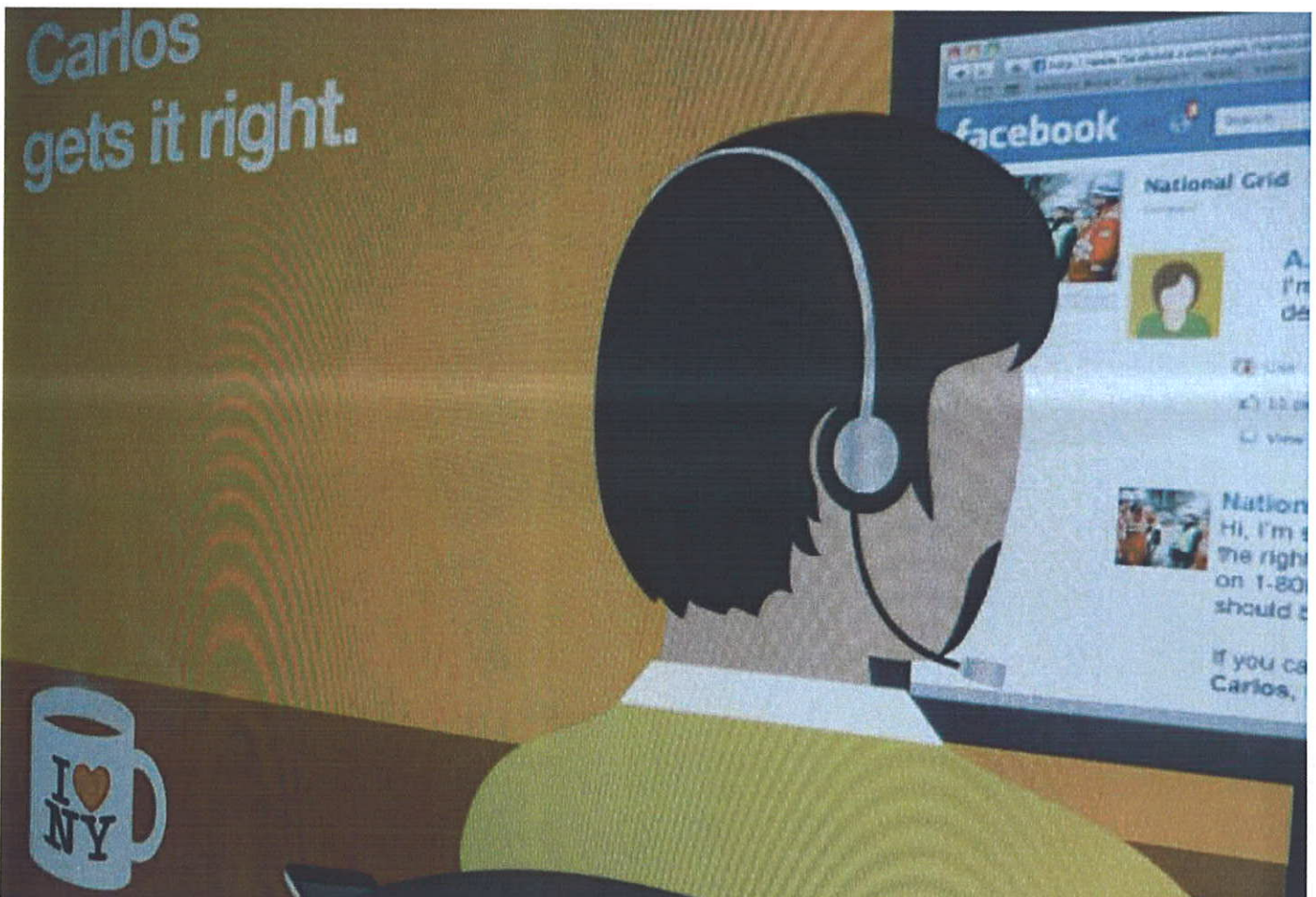
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Commercial Impact (period 2011/2012):

- Return on Investment - 0 Breaches
- Increase in employee awareness +560%
- The all time top-rated story published on Infonet (National Grid's intranet) news.



Screen shot from employee awareness animation, showing Carlos, a call centre operator in the US, using Facebook in the correct manner.

The Brief

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Social media is an integral part of National Grid's new approach to communications and customer service, driving improvements in experience and brand reputation by opening up internal access to all staff. National Grid wanted to get better at engaging with the external world, supporting employees who want to build relationships with stakeholders and customers. The brief was to create an online campaign that supported the new social media policy and engaged with all employees – making them aware of the changes and the best practices that the policy communicates.

National Grid required a robust education campaign and clear guidance material to help employees understand acceptable online behaviour, but also wanted to connect emotionally and translate policy and process in a way that people would understand straight away.

Key Objectives:

- To promote and enhance the business driver behind social media access - to persuade line managers not to block use of social media sites.
- Give clear guidance on how to use social media effectively in a risk-free way.
- Communicate a clear intention to be more proactive in managing external relationships and company reputation.
- To ensure the campaign delivered an outcome of zero breaches to policy, the communications needed to be impactful and meaningful. This meant that a fresh approach was required to reflect the business aspiration of being modern, relevant, and in-touch with what National Grid employees and managers were thinking.



Leaders awareness animated campaign storyboard: using the 'O' device to connect each screen and transition.

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Key Challenges:

Opening up social media attracted massive levels of nervousness, particularly from National Grid HR and Legal teams, who were concerned about the level of potential negative online behaviour that may ensue.

Some leaders saw social media as a threat to productivity for employees who would use it for personal use. They needed to be convinced that it was a business tool.

Empowering employees was a big part of opening up these channels. The challenge was to negate risk. National Grid identified that leaders and managers could set the right tone in a powerful way if they convinced them of the business case.

High volumes of HR and legal breaches were expected when access was first given. Effective influencing of the HR and legal teams was paramount at the onset of the planning, to ensure they were comfortable and that the two animated campaigns actively addressed all their worry-points.



Employee awareness animated campaign storyboard: introducing different job descriptions/profiles and typical social media channel scenarios.

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Project Scope

Sentiment tracking research in recent years has shown that National Grid's stakeholders saw the company as risk averse, conservative and reactive (i.e. they were noticed by their absence).

National Grid's Corporate Affairs ambition therefore, has been to advance and protect the reputation of the company by being proactive and welcomed by their presence. This extends to how they are communicating online.

This need to be proactive – to be seen as a business on the front foot of an issue, to be where the conversation is even when it's a difficult one – was the business driver behind this campaign.

National Grid knew that they could not achieve this level of proactivity – specifically online – if they did not enable their 27,000 employees to use social media and play their part in representing the business as an open organisation focussed on delivering excellent customer service.

So, for the first time – in October 2011 – all National Grid employees were given access to social media at work – from YouTube to Twitter; from Facebook to LinkedIn.

The campaign had two distinct target audiences and required a bespoke approach to each:

For leaders – positioning social media as a business tool. This was timed to coincide with their UK Leadership conference, attended by 700 leaders. The animation was also communicated via a line manager bulletin (1,200 leaders) and one of National Grid's newer channels, 'Leadership At-a-Glance', which is a weekly news round-up e-bulletin distributed to 500 of its most senior leaders.

For all employees – a second campaign, which was interactive and walked employees through various real-life scenarios, containing real examples of good and bad practice when using social media. They promoted the animation using a variety of their most popular and engaging channels. For example: Team Talk – their global face-to-face team briefing process; Straight Talk – personal message from the CEO on the intranet ('Infonet'); a dedicated hub on Infonet, which served as a one-stop-shop for a variety of information about social media (their policies, the animation, useful information). The Social Media Acceptable Use policy was also re-written in plain English and National Grid featured articles with links to the policy and animations on Infonet 'news' with and graphics from the animations shown across a double page spread in the company magazine.



Leaders awareness animated
campaign storyboard example

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The Solution

We created two online social media campaigns – one targeted at employees and one to leaders – to explain the benefits of social media within National Grid, helping engagement with the external world and supporting employees who want to build relationships with stakeholders and customers. The campaign ran both in the UK and US.

Animated campaign for leaders

We created an animated sequence to be used online and at conferences to introduce and explain to leaders how National Grid were opening up the use of social media within the business. The theme of 'open' was used throughout the film with every frame linked by the use of the letter 'O'. The sequences used kinetic typography and simple icons along with a narrative voiceover to deliver the key messages in an impactful and memorable way. "We are opening up the world of social media to our staff. As an integral part of our approach to communications and customer service, we want you to see the bigger picture..."

Animated campaign for all employees

A second piece of animation, which was interactive and walked employees through various real-life scenarios, contained real examples of good and bad practice when using social media. We created a visual look, feel and tone of voice for social media, using an illustrative style that was engaging, straightforward and charming. Animations were used to tell the stories, describing how and when to use social media, examples of good and bad practice and the policies that should be observed. All the appropriate policies were also featured and linked to their intranet.

Project Launch

The campaign was launched in October 2011.

Design and Production Budget

£30,000.



Leaders awareness animated
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Increase in Employee Awareness – read by 4,460 employees

In the initial three months after launch, the article was ranked number three in the most read news stories on the internal Infonet (out of over 200) and was read by 4,460 people. This was beaten only by a crisis communication in the US, which was received with particular interest as it was one of the biggest incidents National Grid has ever had to deal with.

With over 110 'likes' (employees clicking the 'like' option), previously likes had been negligible. This campaign is currently the all time top-rated story published on Infonet news.

Increase in Employee Engagement +560%

In the initial seven weeks the policy received 1,120 views, compared to the 200 average based on past policies. The Social Media hub page on Infonet has been visited 1,522 times.

Return on Investment

0 Breaches since launch
0 Disciplinary Proceedings
0 Security Issues

All the experts were predicting that there would be a high volume of HR and legal breaches when social media was opened up for employee access.

Increased Employee Perception and Confidence

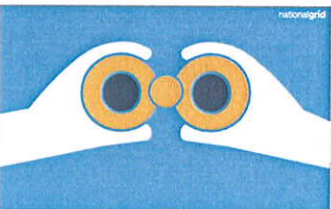
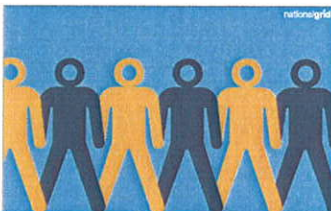
A senior leadership conference was held and attended by 700 of National Grid's senior leaders in the UK, where the animated campaign was launched. 68% of attendees found the social media element most useful. Many comments were received after the conference, clearly showing enthusiasm for social media and the willingness to embrace the new technology available.

'This is a real step forward and will allow us to communicate more effectively with each other and our customers.'

National Grid Senior Business Partner

'It's great to see that National Grid is embracing social networking sites as a means of efficient communication.'

National Grid Senior Business Leader



Leaders awareness animated campaign storyboard example

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Human Impact

Since the launch, National Grid have suffered *two major incidents that have had an impact on the welfare of National Grid employees and customers *(A water ingress issue in Wirral, UK and a massive snowstorm in US) Crisis communication played a significant role in the management of these incidents, with social media playing an important and effective part in the communication channel mix.

There is now a demand to share social media activity reports at senior leadership level, and proactive social media planning is now a requirement in annual results.



Social Media characters