



How to

Communicate Diversity & Inclusion

Your Ultimate Guide



Introduction

Diversity & inclusion has now become a priority for most organizations as the benefits of having a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace are far reaching:

- talent attraction & retention
- better representation of the diverse communities / customer bases they serve
- increased creativity and innovation



Internal communications teams have an important role to play in promoting and fostering diversity and inclusion - in fact, it's a concept that's quickly becoming an increasing focus for internal communicators everywhere.

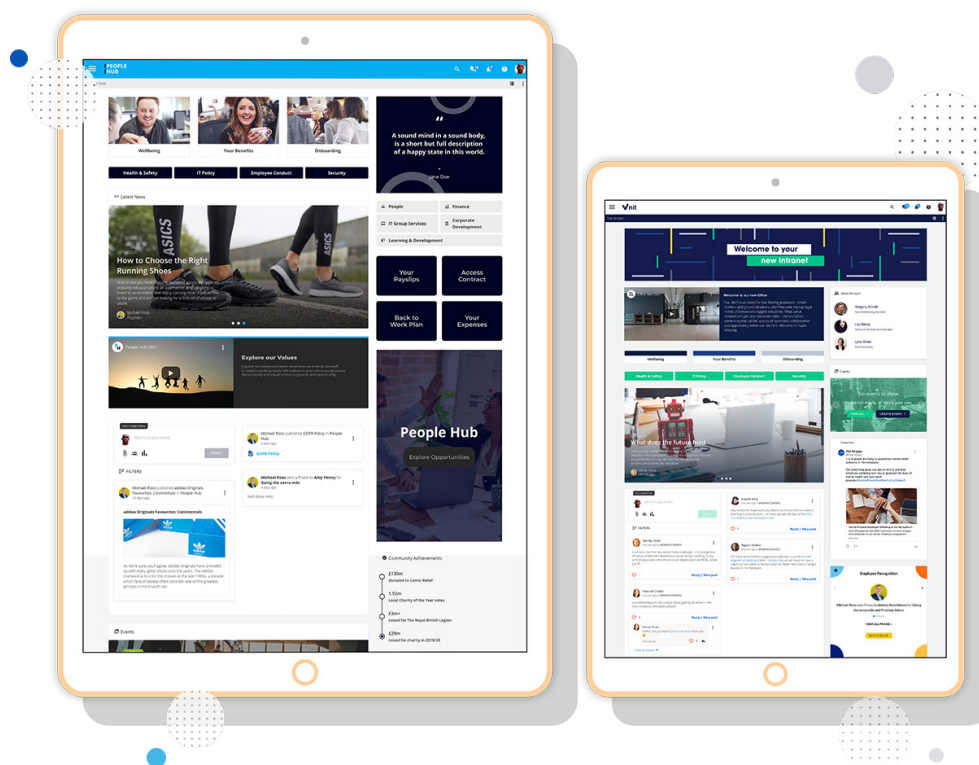
In this Guide we offer some practical tips to doing this effectively within your internal communications strategy, under some key headings.

Establish Audiences & Key Messages

HR teams are usually responsible for the D&I strategy and policy. Liaise with them to understand the key elements of the policy and any specific priorities driving key messages. There are likely to be high level messages such as the organization's priority to increase the diversity of its workforce or inclusive workplace, and specific ones around particular groups. This may include increasing the proportion of women in management roles, or targeted messages for specific audiences e.g. managers.

Develop a Rhythm & Drumbeat

At Oak we are passionate advocates of a rhythm and drumbeat when it comes to communications - consistent, regular communications keep people informed, engaged and connected. Effective internal communications should reflect your employees' needs and interests as well as your organisation's agenda – talking about the things that matter to them like planned changes, outlook for jobs, reward – and of course Diversity & Inclusion. Make communicating D&I a regular element of your content.



Give your Inclusion Networks a Voice

Many organisations now have networks where their people with common interests meet to discuss, share experiences and ideas for developing inclusion. These typically include:

- BAME
- LBGTQ+
- PARENTS & CARERS
- WOMEN
- FAITH
- MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH / WELLBEING

These groups are normally owned / overseen by the HR team. If you're responsible for internal communications you need to be plugged into these networks and up to speed with their debates, not least to identify content for your channels. If they don't already exist, support your HR team to get them set up, name them, recruit a lead and deputy for each network and agree their remit and focus.

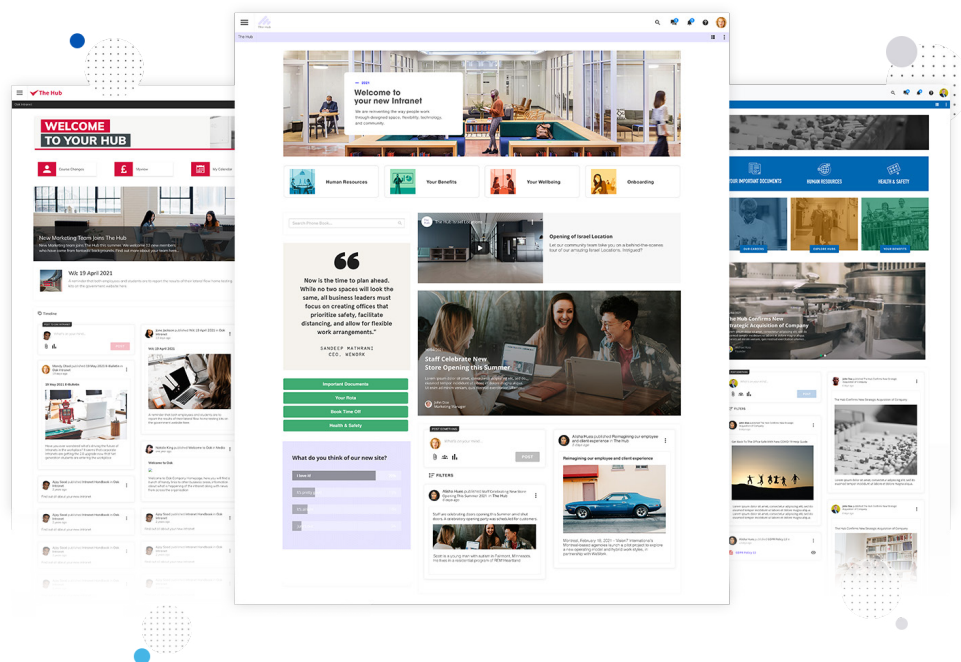
Give these networks and their leads access to your main channels to give them a platform to share what they're up to including plans for events, appeals for new members etc. Help them tell their stories, interview key players and profile them. Give them dedicated pages on your intranet with key information and contact details so people can find and connect with them easily.

Include them in face-to-face channels. Give them slots at your 'town halls' and other events alongside business updates to bring their networks' activities and the work they're doing to life; this will also reinforce that D&I is a key priority for your organisation.

Another tried and trusted tactic is to have an annual or bi-annual Networks Fair - a day when all the Networks promote their groups and activities. For example, in your staff restaurant (if you have one) or, in your largest meeting room. And make the fair

last beyond that day and have a wider impact by doing short video interviews with representatives from each network and sharing them on your intranet.

Finally, as well as using digital signage for D&I messages, there's still a place for old style visual management whether it's temporary or permanent. Have a D&I / Networks noticeboard in a key traffic area where they can post details of their group, campaigns, upcoming events etc.



Ensure Balance & Fair Share of Voice

If you have several networks, it's important to ensure balance and a fair share of voice between them. You will have limited availability in your internal comms calendar amongst all the other business messaging so it's important to ensure that availability is shared and also aligned with D&I priorities in the HR / People Strategy.

In terms of timing of comms for each network, look to tie into specific national and local events and campaigns relating to each group e.g. Black History Month for the BAME network and Pride events for LGBTQ+.

And be careful not to overdo it – too much D&I comms can turn people off. Effective communications 'air traffic control' will ensure you're not trying to 'land too many planes' at once.

Support Leadership to be Allies

Many organisations now have senior leader allies or sponsors for their inclusion networks and an executive sponsor for D&I generally. If the organisation is committed to developing D&I, then leadership need to be actively involved. You can help them with that by integrating them into your D&I communications.

Support them with blogging about D&I or specific networks / groups. Publish interviews with them on this theme. Encourage networks to invite members of the leadership team to their meetings. Get them to talk to D&I initiatives at your local town hall or other dedicated space. Give your employees the opportunity to ask your leaders questions and give them direct feedback on D&I issues as part of Q&A sessions. Don't forget to share these Q&As through your channels e.g. with intranet news stories.

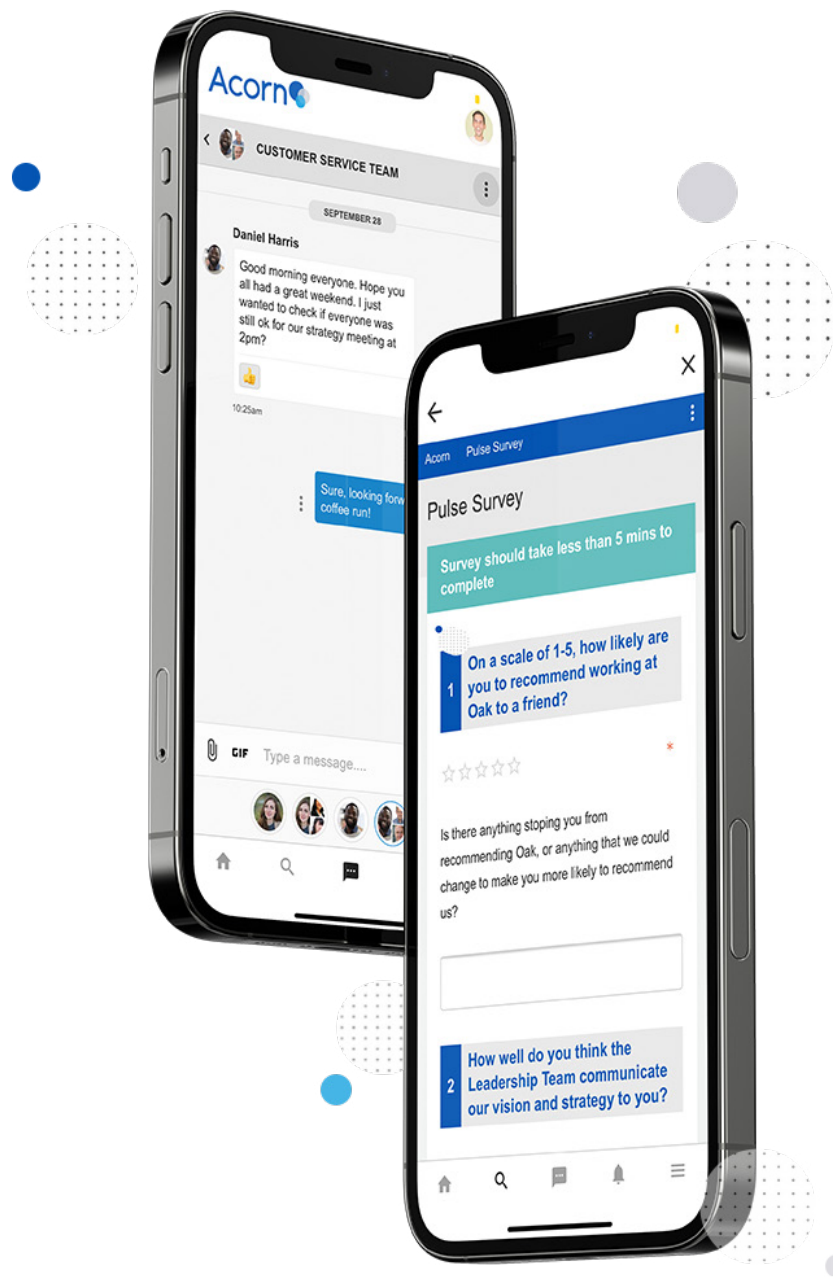


Encourage Conversations

Internal communications teams can't just focus on top down and bottom up – they have a key role to play in encouraging collaboration and enabling conversations across the business through innovative face-to-face formats, social intranets and other digital platforms. Employees increasingly expect the same interactive digital experience at

work that they take for granted in their personal life.

If your organisation has a social intranet like Oak or collaboration platform like Teams or Slack, make sure you have a Channels / Groups set up for your networks where they can have online conversations and debates in between their meetings. Join these Groups to stay up to speed with their agenda, generate content ideas, and even help connect them to leadership. If you don't have these platforms internally, then of course WhatsApp can be used.



Involve Line Managers

Many organisations are now training their managers in Diversity & Inclusion so that they understand the issues and can foster an inclusive environment in their team, supporting the organisation's D&I agenda and priorities.

You can promote manager accountability and involvement by including D&I messaging in the content for manager-specific events e.g. leadership conference, your dedicated manager channel if you have one or your line manager communication / cascade tool, providing content that is 'team meeting discussion-friendly', making it easy for managers to use as part of their team meetings.



Need support?

Like the ideas in this Guide but not sure where to start? If you would like support to develop and deliver your Diversity and & Inclusion communications, get in touch – we have experts on our team who can help.

Need Support?

Get in touch with our experts today.

