

2018 Gold Quill Awards Communication Management Division Work Plan

Entrant: Cary Bignell	Division/Category: Division 1: Communications Management, Category 1: Internal Communication
Organisation: Transport for NSW	Time period: March 2016 – December 2017
Entry title: Flexibility Works	Entrant's role: Director, Corporate Communications
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Project description: In early 2016, NSW Premier Mike Baird announced that all public service jobs will be flexible by 2019 on the basis of 'If not, why not?'. This became the mantra for the development of a strategic communications campaign at Transport for NSW that has seen a measurable change in both the attitudes and practices of managers and employees, with a marked increase in the number of flexible arrangements.	

1. THE BUSINESS NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) leads a safe, efficient, integrated transport system for 7.5 million customers in NSW, Australia. We're responsible for strategy, planning, policy, regulation and service delivery for all modes of transport including bus, rail, ferry, light rail, car, freight, cycling and walking. TfNSW is the lead agency of the NSW Transport cluster that consists of 4 other agencies that deliver and operate transport services – with a diverse group of 25,000 staff located around the State.

In March 2016, NSW Premier Mike Baird announced that “one hundred percent of public service jobs will be flexible by 2019 on the basis of “If not, why not”. The Secretary for Transport (CEO equivalent), Tim Reardon, used this as an opportunity to transform the Transport workforce and lay down the challenge to become a more diverse, agile and innovative organisation.

The push for a more flexible workplace aligned with other major initiatives across the Transport cluster: increasing the number of women in senior leadership roles, the roll-out of activity based working (contemporary workspaces with modern technology to aid collaboration) and an IT transformation program. The timing was right to challenge our people to think differently about workplace performance and practices. Research clearly shows the business case for flexible working. Organisations can improve productivity, attraction and retention, as well as reduce their cost base. In responding to the Premier's request, there was an opportunity to evolve into a more productive organisation with a more engaged workforce.

The communications opportunity – Given the significant attitudinal and behavioural change involved and the complex operating environment, the communications team recommended to the Executive that the flexible working campaign would have two stages: (i) a foundational campaign that focused on increasing awareness and changing behaviour at Transport for NSW in 2016 and 2017 and (ii) a subsequent rollout across the operating agencies in 2017/18 to end of 2019. This staged approach would enable us to build campaign momentum over time and learn lessons as we go before rolling out across the entire Transport cluster, which included complex, unionised, operational workforces. This entry covers the first stage of the communications campaign, which if successful, would lay the groundwork and enabled the development and go ahead of a cluster-wide campaign.

2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has around 5,000 employees across nine divisions. Most are office-based in the Sydney central business district and throughout Sydney metropolitan areas. A small number of project teams are site-based or in regional NSW offices. Our baseline HR data showed that requests for flexible working were averaging 32 a month and that a large proportion was being rejected by managers. To better understand the issues or concerns preventing managers and employees from implementing flexible working arrangements, we undertook a broad range of research, drawing upon case studies from leading Australian and international organisations including Telstra, Price Waterhouse Coopers and EBay, as well as reviewing research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency and the Public Service Commission. We also held workshops with 120 TfNSW managers to test the research and our approach, to understand the 'current state' and thinking of our audiences, and to develop solutions to address them. It became clear that there were two groups and a range of factors to address for each:

1. Leaders and managers – the main influencers of workplace change and flexible working, yet a number of myths or misconceptions existed and were barriers to change e.g. there were perceptions that flexible workers are less committed, flexible working will have a negative effect on team performance, and I need line of sight to manage effectively. They needed to understand the business case and often needed to, change their own perceptions. The workshops also uncovered there was limited knowledge of what flexible working really was and options available, and managers had concerns about inadequate IT equipment and access when working remotely and the lack of their own leaders' buy-in.

2. Employees – they were reluctant to initiate a conversation with their manager or even consider flexible working because they felt their manager was reluctant and it might affect their promotion opportunities how their team members perceive them. It was also clear there was a lack of understanding of what flexible working is and the options available, their responsibilities and how to initiate conversations with their managers.

We developed a communications strategy that would address the issues and concerns for these primary audiences at TfNSW, along with key secondary audiences to help champion the changes.

Primary audiences:

Audience	Characteristics
Top 200 senior leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes the Secretary (CEO equivalent) and his direct reports, plus their direct reports • Responsible for driving change and meeting Premier’s priorities.
Senior Service Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 750 senior managers and people managers • Make recruitment, promotion and retention decisions. • Concerned with resourcing and productivity. • Both change champions and change resisters. • Have direct contact with a range of employees.
TfNSW staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,000 staff across nine divisions • Majority are office based and see their line manager regularly. • A range of professions including HR, finance, project management with roles particularly suited to working more flexibly. • Constant/regular access to email and intranet.

Secondary audiences:

Audience	Characteristics
HR Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 100 people in a shared services function • Usually the first port of call regarding HR enquiries. • Influential re: employee perceptions of new initiatives or changes.
HR Business Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for supporting the business (especially people managers) to follow the flexible working policy and procedures. • Valuable allies in any change program.
Staying Connected participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 90 staff per year on our parental leave program • Staff who are soon to go on, are on or will be returning from parental leave, and their managers. • Typically very keen to work more flexibly upon returning to work.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Create a more flexible workplace where people understand the benefits of flexibility and are empowered to proactively seek flexible working solutions that work for them and for the business.

Objective 1: Educate leaders, managers and staff about the personal and business benefits of flexibility in the workplace and about their specific role in creating a more flexible workplace.

- >60% of staff surveyed understand the benefits of flexibility for them personally and for the business.
- >50% of senior leaders surveyed understand the benefits of creating a more flexible workplace.
- >50% of senior leaders surveyed understand their role in creating a more flexible workplace.
- >60% of staff surveyed have had a conversation about flexibility in the workplace.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver resources that equip managers and employees to introduce more flexible work arrangements in their team/role.

- Achieve high levels of staff engagement with campaign communication (as indicated by open rates and click rates).

Objective 3: Increase staff satisfaction with the availability of flexible working arrangements and support the business to double the number of flexible working requests at TfNSW from 32 per month.

- >50% of staff surveyed in post-launch survey are satisfied with their access to flexible work arrangements.
- Increase in satisfaction levels reported in the People Matter Employee Survey.
- The number of flexible working requests doubles to >64 per month.

4. THE SOLUTION OVERVIEW

Strategy – The focus was first on managers and leaders – that is, start with a leader-led change that would have more chance of sticking and normalising this new way of working. Leadership buy-in was identified as key to the campaign’s success so we positioned the Secretary to lead communications. We briefed the top 200 senior leaders at Transport Exchange, a twice yearly event. As the influencers and approvers, we wanted to bring this group ‘into the circle’ first. The Secretary (our CEO equivalent) led the campaign and called upon leaders to change. A video featuring fellow managers showcased existing, successful flexible arrangements. A senior leader from Telstra spoke and shared his flexible working journey.

For managers, we focused on listening to them and providing strong, compelling information on why flexible working works and practical resources to empower them to drive change in their teams. We then focused on a bottom up approach, giving employees easy to understand information that empowered them to have a conversation to make changes to their role and/or in their teams – a grassroots-led change. The two-part approach would build momentum over time and create awareness, understanding and a mindset shift among our people and leaders towards flexible working being good news (knowledge and attitude change) and enable an environment where action could take place including ‘safe’ conversations around flexible working arrangements (behavioural change).

Creative approach – We developed a campaign brand that directly addressed leader/manager misconceptions. It focused around a deliberately confident statement, Flexibility Works, so there was no doubt about our stance on this ‘controversial’ issue. The design and visual elements were also crucial as each agency has a distinct brand. It needed to work across the different brands, starting in TfNSW but later in operating agencies in stage two (where those employees tended to ignore ‘TfNSW branded’ comms, deciding they didn’t really apply to them). The final creative used a brightly coloured slinky, a popular coiled spring toy that is highly flexible. It was distinctive and recognisable, aligned to the program’s core messaging, enabled fun and animation, and worked with all Transport agency colours and brands.

Key messages – Apart from the campaign slogan, we developed key messaging to resonate and address key concerns of both leaders and employees, including overarching messaging such as ‘Flexibility benefits everyone’ and ‘We know flexibility works. It helps us attract and retain the best talent and promote a healthy work-life balance.’

Timing and key activities

Timing	Audience	Communications approach	Tactics
April 2016 onwards	HR Business Partners and HR Advisory	Key stakeholders. Consult and brief on communications prior to launch and ongoing.	Face-to-face briefings with the teams to raise awareness and understanding, and answer questions.
April 2016	TfNSW top 200 LAUNCH	Brief first to gain buy-in. Key messages emphasise role of leaders.	Senior leaders briefed at Transport Exchange, myth busting video and Telstra case studies. Secretary's address, TfNSW manager resources.
April May August	Senior Service (top 750) leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with direct communications. Provide key messaging, guidelines and tools to help them implement policies and procedures. Show examples of flexibility working. Direct to resources and workshops. Demonstrate we are listening to concerns and providing solutions. 	<p>Secretary email. Communicate desired behaviours, manager video, new resources, strategic links to activity based working and IT initiatives.</p> <p>All leaders invited to attend a ‘Making flexibility work’ workshop to discuss concerns and solutions.</p> <p>Developed and launched a managers’ toolkit based on workshop feedback.</p>
May	All TfNSW staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched the Staying Connected parental leave program and pilot workshops, strongly aligned to flexible working options and targeted at parents. 	Email to managers, intranet for all staff to promote workshops, digital screens, posters.
September	All TfNSW staff - LAUNCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide employees with information on the flexible working options, their 	Campaign launched to employees with email from the Secretary containing links to intranet and flexible working resources. Digital pop up intranet

		responsibilities and where to go for more information.	tool. All staff video with case studies. Promotional stands in six key offices and posters.
Jan 17 - Sept 2017	TfNSW staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build momentum through continued promotional opportunities. • Measure program effectiveness. 	<p>Ongoing communications post-launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee survey • Launch of new Staying Connected online hub • Four case studies to showcase how flexibility can and does work.

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES -

Budget and resources - The internal communications team delivered the campaign alongside business as usual. The budget for Flexibility Works was \$70K. We knew we needed a contemporary, engaging design, so we allocated \$20K for the creative development including the design concept, templates for presentations and factsheets. We then brought the concept in-house so that future designs could be done by our own team. The development and production of three videos was outsourced at around \$35K, and remaining budget used for implementation.

Stakeholder engagement - We needed to ensure that key stakeholders were briefed on our plans, especially in HR, or there was a risk our efforts would be undermined. We consulted with HR Policy and Organisational Development who developed change interventions including ongoing manager workshops and unconscious bias training.

Changing mindsets - Our research showed that our key influencers had reservations about introducing more flexibility. While we recognised this wasn't going to change overnight, we needed to directly address these concerns in our communications to gain traction and credibility with this group.

Maintaining momentum - As a long-term culture shift, the initial launch alone wasn't going to create the change we needed. To address this, our plans for the initial phase at TfNSW covered an 18 month period, which allowed us to respond to feedback with new and refreshed resources, and sustain the messaging through proof points and related initiatives.

Formal vs informal arrangements - A lot of flexible arrangements are informal and undocumented, which is challenging from a measurement perspective e.g. in the pulse survey we conducted after launching the campaign, only one in five flexible working arrangements were documented with HR.

6. MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Objective 1: Educate leaders, managers and staff about the personal and business benefits of flexibility in the workplace and about their specific role in creating a more flexible workplace.

- Pulse check survey in March 2017 reported high levels of understanding about the personal (85%) and business (84%) benefits of flexibility.
- 100% of respondents said Transport Exchange leader event was good or very good at demonstrating benefits of flexible working.
- 80% of respondents said Transport Exchange leader event was good or very good at providing help in understanding what needs be done to make flexible working a reality in their area.
- 80% of staff surveyed in March 2017 had a flexibility conversation in the last 6 months with their manager, team or family.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver resources that equip managers and employees to introduce more flexible work arrangements in their team/role

- Secretary launch email to 750 managers - 5,430 opens and 1,472 clicks on links to resources (data indicates the email was forwarded many times and/or reopened and referred to regularly).
- Toolkit sent to 750 managers – Initially 4,086 opens, 659 clicks (88% click rate). By Dec 17: 984 clicks.
- All-staff email: 3,851 opens (96%), 1,443 clicks on links to resources (36%).
- As at December 2017, the intranet site has reached 14,570 visits and 22,422 page views; manager video: 2,859 unique downloads and 7,489 repeat views, Employee video: 3,481 unique downloads and 6,942 repeat views.

Objective 3: Increase staff satisfaction with the availability of flexible working arrangements and support the business to double the number of flexible working requests at TfNSW from 32 per month.

- 60% of respondents in the pulse check survey were satisfied with their access to flexible arrangements.
- 65% of staff satisfied in 2016 increased to 67% in 2017 in the People Matter Employee Survey.
- Documented arrangements increased to 56 average per month (334) between March 16 to August 16. Then again increased to 69 average per month (1,523) between March 16 to January 18.