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Board of Trustees

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE – 2022 REVIEW

(Paper by Simon Timmis. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting please contact Simon Timmis by email stimmis@theiet.org)

1. Issue

This paper and an accompanying presentation provide an update on activities undertaken by the Corporate Communications team in 2022.

2. Timing

Board of Trustees meeting, 16 March 2023.

3. For Note

The Board of Trustees is invited to note this report.

4. Background

The Corporate Communications team consists of several functions. All internal and external communication requirements are handled by the team along with coordination of crisis communications and the development and implementation of our EDI strategy. The scope of the team can be found in Appendix A.

5. Key Points

This report focusses on our External and Internal Communications and Public Affairs efforts over the past year along with key highlights of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity. Both our 'EDI – A Year in Review 2022' and our Volunteer EDI survey results will be also presented to the Board of Trustees in March 2023 giving a fuller overview of our EDI activity. Our colleague EDI survey results were presented to the Board of Trustees in October 2022.

6. External Communications Overview, Strategy and Performance

- 6.1. 2022 was a challenging year in the external communication landscape with significant stories such as the war in Ukraine, global economic turmoil, returns from the pandemic and the death of HM The Queen dominating the news agenda. However, the team secured substantial external coverage for the IET in 2022 against this backdrop.
- 6.2. The team is responsible for the delivery of the Quality Coverage KPI which looks at the quality, volume and reach of our news coverage across print, broadcast, online and specialist trade media. This is a scoring system which attributes points on a scale of 0 to 6 for each piece of coverage received, dependant on its prominence, reach and relevance to our strategy. The team also manages the IET's corporate social media accounts and online reputation.

- 6.2.1. Our end-of-year position shows we achieved a total of 17,530 quality points globally against a target of 14,850. This was a result of our targeted, bolder messaging linked to our societal challenges, such as work around the Online Safety Bill, and supporting strategic outputs such as our STEM education drive.
- 6.2.2. For comparison, these 2022 results are 76% higher than 2019 and 78% higher than 2020. They are however 18% lower than 2021 due to the one-off additional coverage injection that year resulting from the IET@150 / Difference Makers programme.
- 6.3. 2022 regional results:
- UK + RoW – Achieved 13,617 points against a target of 11,900 (114%) across 4,943 pieces of coverage.
 - China – Achieved 952 points against a target of 900 (106%) across 212 pieces of coverage.
 - India – Achieved 1,436 points against a target of 1,000 (144%) across 453 pieces of coverage.
- 6.4. An objective for the team throughout 2022 was to ensure a monthly target on obtaining national coverage across daily print and broadcast titles to ensure the IET remains a prominent and influential voice within the media on engineering and technology topics.
- 6.5. This was achieved both proactively, through key campaigns, and by reacting quickly to the daily news agenda to spot opportunities for the IET to comment, such as the UK's energy crisis, skills pipeline and Budget announcements. We also looked at how we could maximise the power of public figures and IET Honorary Fellows such as Major Tim Peake and Carol Vorderman. This gave us an additional route for advocacy and influence as well as increased news value for our campaigns that supported national cut-through.
- 6.6. Throughout the year we achieved 466 pieces of national coverage across the UK, including: The One Show, Good Morning Britain, BBC News online, CBBC Newsround online, BBC Woman's Hour, MailOnline, MSN online, Politics Home, Times News UK, Sky News Radio, Yahoo! UK and Ireland, Times Radio and Daily Express.
- 6.7. You can read about some of our key external communications campaigns and their results in Appendix B.

7. Internal (Member and Colleague) Communications

- 7.1. 2022 saw us emerge from global pandemic lockdown conditions, adopt new ways of working, including hybrid working principles and the availability of new technology, move into our newly refurbished office in Stevenage, Futures Place, and welcome a new Chief Executive and Secretary.
- 7.2. Throughout the year we delivered over 400 updates to colleagues via our intranet as well as a range of IET Life blogs and intranet content clusters designed to support knowledge sharing. The team also published over 100 online Member News stories and drafted over 60 speeches and presentations for senior internal stakeholders.
- 7.3. Key activities:
- 7.3.1. In March 2022 the team played a key role in arranging content and engagement resources for a series of Welcome Back sessions to induct 550+ Stevenage-based colleagues into the new Futures Place and adopt new ways of working. We measured colleague change readiness before and after introducing changes. After working

remotely for an extended period of time, some colleagues told us they were feeling apprehensive about coming back into an office environment. Colleagues felt more ready to embrace new ways of working as a result of our campaign and welcome back programme.

- 7.3.2. In May 2022 we held a series of Strategy Days to enable colleagues to get together in-person or virtually to discuss different aspects of the IET strategy. This also included a stakeholder event.
- 7.3.3. Since September 2022, with the introduction of hybrid working and a change in leadership, we have started to revamp some of our internal communication channels to keep colleagues engaged, regardless of their work location. This has included the introduction of a new 'In the Know' all-colleague event to replace our previous online Town Hall format, which is held live at Futures Place and broadcast online for colleagues to join in other locations. This has resulted in greater engagement levels, both in terms of views (+c. 30%) and the questions being submitted to the Executive Team as part of the regular Q&A. It has also been an important tool in demonstrating transparency in our communications.
- 7.3.4. A key focus for the team is to support more two-way conversations, ensuring that our colleagues' voices are heard. We have continued our regular Listening session programme to support key changes taking place across the IET including the introduction of new MS365 functionality and preparations for the transition from our Darwin customer database to a new Dynamics CRM so that colleagues can ask questions, raise concerns and share knowledge. These sessions take place in-person and online and regularly attract 20-30 attendees.
- 7.3.5. In November 2022, we helped develop and launch the FOCUSED change programme – working closely with the IET Executive Team. The change programme and associated initiatives and communications will be a core focus on the team in 2023.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Highlights

- 8.1. In 2021, as part of our continued development within equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) we committed to publicly review our EDI activities and progress annually. The *EDI - A year in review 2022* will be presented to the Board of Trustees in March 2022 and shared with all colleagues and published on our webpages in line with the publication of the IET Annual Report and Accounts.
- 8.2. Some of our main EDI achievements in 2022 include:
 - Reviewing and updating our EDI Strategy to 2025.
 - Reviewing our EDI governance and forming our first EDI Member Working Party, chaired by Katy Deacon BEng MEng CEng MIET, IET Trustee.
 - Continuing our focus of ensuring a data driven approach to our EDI Strategy and improving our diversity data collection and monitoring processes. We have conducted our first ever Volunteer EDI survey and second annual internal colleague survey as well as taking part in the Profession Bodies Consortium EDI research project.
 - Working with our volunteers to improve EDI with and for our volunteering community. We have held workshops, shared knowledge and discussed EDI progress with volunteers within Academic Accreditor Conference, Registration and Standards Conference, Volunteer Engagement Board, Volunteer Support Working Party, Registration Group and more.

- Delivering our Reflect event with RS Components and Association for Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers (AFBE), an annual event aimed at introducing young people from minority ethnic and low socio-economic backgrounds to opportunities available in STEM.
- Holding ourselves to account by conducting an internal review utilising the Royal Academy of Engineering and Science Council's Progression Framework, and well as introducing new measure of success for our EDI Strategy.
- Influencing others. We submitted an IET response to the Science and Technology inquiry into Diversity in STEM, we sponsor and take part in the Diversity in STEM All Party Parliamentary Group and presented at the Parliamentary Internet, Communications and Technology Forum Diversity and Inclusion Rally.
- Sharing good practice. We contribute to the Royal Academy of Engineering and Science Council's Progression Framework Steering Group, and work to communicate and share good practice with partners and other Institutions for example the Royal Academy of Engineering, Engineering UK, Engineering Council.
- Developing our EDI Partnerships. We have worked with and supported organisations in the sector with common goals such as the AFBE and Equal Engineers.

9. Resources

There are no current resource implications.

10. Risk

No risks have been identified.

Corporate Communications Team Scope

- 10.1. **Strategic communications:** Undertakes horizon scans for the whole organisation. Develops the core narrative, gathers insight, and evaluates PR, traditional and social media activity – protecting and enhancing the IET's reputation and the role of engineering in society.
- 10.2. **Media (traditional and social media):** produces publishable content (rather than simply distributing press releases). Runs corporate PR campaigns and manages social media engagement with a variety of our audiences on our corporate channels.
- 10.3. **Public affairs:** develops effective two-way relationships with key public affairs audiences, so that the IET becomes a stronger influencer for engineering-related policy.
- 10.4. **Internal and member communications:** Works to engage colleagues and our members to support the delivery of our key priorities and objectives, as well as promoting our vision, mission and values.
- 10.5. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Develops internal and external campaigns to demonstrate that the IET and the engineering profession are welcoming and inclusive to all, where everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Key 2022 External Communications Campaigns

10.6. Online Safety Bill (Metaverse)

- 10.6.1. In April 2022 we launched a national campaign to raise awareness of the IET's 'Safeguarding the Metaverse' report, which calls for the Government to ensure its proposed Online Safety Bill adequately covers safety risks associated with emerging technologies. These include immersive and 'live' scenarios often accessed and experienced via virtual reality headsets.
- 10.6.2. We positioned co-author Catherine Allen, alongside child safety advocate and IET Honorary Fellow Carol Vorderman as key spokespersons, collectively undertaking 60 pieces of significant national media coverage. This resulted in 250 quality coverage points (a quarter of our annual target for societal challenges). By establishing ourselves as a key voice early on as the Bill progressed, we continued to be sought for our position throughout the year as the story developed.

10.7. Engineer a Better World (EABW) – including Engineering Open House Day

- 10.7.1. Engineer a Better world is an annual campaign aimed at children aged 5-13 and their influencers (notably caregivers) to help them see and engage with STEM differently, through the lens of their hobbies and interests. It dovetails with the Royal Academy of Engineering's 'This is Engineering' social media campaign which targets 13-18 year olds.

10.8. Engineering a Better World 2021 – Super Realoos – Conclusion

- 10.8.1. Our 2021 EABW campaign culminated in February 2022 with a feature on BBC's The One Show. This primetime slot featured our competition winner Harry and his hero Major Tim Peake at the Science Museum in London and highlighted the importance of fun and engaging STEM initiatives in nurturing young talent.
- 10.8.2. Our post campaign evaluation demonstrated the benefits of extending the campaign to secure the One Show coverage:
- 4 in 10 parents noted that someone in their household watched the feature, with 3 in 10 noting that their children have seen it.
 - 9 in 10 enjoyed the feature.
 - Amongst parents whose children saw the feature, 8 in 10 feel their kids would be interested in taking part [in a STEM competition].
 - Three quarters of parents in households where the clip was seen agree that it helped children to think positively about STEM and encouraged a STEM conversation.

10.9. Open House Day 2022

- 10.9.1. As live events continued to transition back from virtual in the wake of Covid-19, we secured 16 companies across the UK who partnered with us to open their doors to families for last year's Engineering Open House Day, including Thinktank Birmingham, Fun Kids Radio, Bletchley Park and The Prince's Foundation.
- 10.9.2. More than 2,200 children and their parents attended an event across the country, including 176 people at Savoy Place. The Savoy Place event was also broadcast online with on-demand figures reaching 4,600 views.

10.9.3. IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year, Ciara McGrath gave media interviews ahead of the day across more than 140 radio stations, including Times Radio, BBC Radio London, Checkpoint TV and Northern Visions TV talking about the importance of STEM initiatives. We also had nearly 16,000 organic engagements via social media.

10.10. Engineering a Better World 2022 – Backpack to the Future – Launch

10.10.1. In September 2022 we launched our latest Engineer a Better World Campaign, partnering with global fashion brand HYPE. to explore how engineering and technology will play a huge role in the future of fashion innovation.

10.10.2. As well as creating the world's first bio-degradable backpack, we asked children aged 5-13 to engineer their own design that would help solve a societal challenge or aid the wearer to do incredible things.

10.10.3. Launch coverage included BBC London, BBC Humberside, BBC Leicester, FunKids and Greatest Hits Radio Manchester and key children's outlets such as Newsround, Primary Times and The Week Junior.

10.10.4. We received one of the campaign's highest competition entry rates to date with 330 from across the UK. The winning entry, the Breathe Better Backpack, featured built in air filters so clean the air around the user and was aimed at asthma sufferers.

10.10.5. The winner's announcement took place in January 2023 with extensive national press coverage (evaluation ongoing). HYPE. also featured a working prototype of the backpack in their stores for over a month during February 2023, extending the reach and visibility of the campaign to wider audiences.

10.11. Education Thought-leadership Campaigns

10.12. National Apprenticeship Week

10.12.1. In February 2022, we created a news audio package for National Apprenticeship Week – a quick way for broadcasters to drop pre-prepared content straight into their news bulletins on topical subjects. Through the audio package we were able to help demystify the routes into engineering and technology, show the advantages to vocational learning and signpost listeners to more information. This was used and broadcast across more than 300 radio stations giving us a total of 3,078 QC points.

10.13. Exam Results

10.13.1. A proactive media campaign for A Level results day on 18 August 2022 focused on young people's subject choices and careers in STEM. We pitched and arranged for David Lakin to speak to media outlets throughout the day with the following coverage across Sky News Radio, Bauer West Midlands, Times Radio, BBC Radio Leeds, UK Local TV, BBC Radio Northampton, Hits Radio North Yorkshire, UCB, That's TV Network, BBC Radio Gloucestershire, and Northern Visions TV.

10.14. Always-on

10.14.1. Collaboration and support across external communications and public affairs for our work to advocate government to embed better learning outcomes linked to engineering throughout the primary and secondary curriculums. Over 30 pieces of trade and broadcast press achieved.

10.15. Young Woman Engineer of the Year (YWE)

- 10.15.1. YWE provides a sustained platform for us throughout the calendar year to amplify the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in engineering and technology. We also support our winners and finalists to become impactful industry and societal role models, with many taking media spokesperson roles.
- 10.15.2. Throughout 2022, we secured more than 100 pieces of coverage for both the YWE programme, profiling our winners, and on the importance of diversifying STEM. Highlights include national, broadcast, regional and trade coverage, such as: BBC World Service, Times Radio, BBC Radio London, BBC UK Black Radio, BBC Radio 5 Live, Eureka Magazine, FE News, Cambridgeshire Live, The Daily Brit, BBC Radio Sheffield, Leeds, Derby, Nottingham and Bristol.

10.16. Net Zero Clean Air Campaign – Winter Idling

- 10.16.1. We finished 2022 with a consumer campaign linked to our zero-carbon transport policy work. In order to appeal to media and wider consumers, we developed a human-interest angle with the timely approach of winter idling habits during December's cold snap.
- 10.16.2. We coupled expert advice with new research to land coverage across nationals, regionals and broadcast, including: Daily Telegraph print, Express online, Politics Home, Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News, Yorkshire Post, BBC Hereford and Worcester and BBC Asian Network.
- 10.16.3. We also ran a social media influencer campaign to further the reach and engagement (campaign evaluation being finalised).