

Driving success through a proper understanding of internal communication



The need

American Express is a US-owned global company providing credit cards, business and travel services to consumers and businesses worldwide.

Amex is striving to be market leader in all of its markets, and to deliver first-class service to customers, regardless of where they are. This is a very tough target in a highly competitive market and requires internal communication to be absolutely first rate.

American Express asked ColeySmith Consulting to assess the current state of its internal communication, to help it determine ways to 'buy-in' staff to a new strategy and greater consumer focus.

The approach

To understand the underlying issues behind internal communication and identify improvements, we carried out a comprehensive review in the following areas:

- **Message** – we identified key business messages through interviews and a review of key documents.
- **Market** – we conducted a detailed survey, one to one interviews and Solutions Groups™ with staff across Europe to explore issues in-depth and develop ideas for improvement. We also reviewed the results of the staff survey to extract any relevant information on feelings towards communication.
- **Media** – we analysed all existing media channels, formal and informal, to determine gaps and opportunities, in particular where messages weren't getting through and how we could improve 'air traffic control'.

The results

The review identified a number of barriers to success and enabled us to advise Amex on how to engage employees with strategy and build improved customer focus across the business. We also advised on how to build a proper 'air traffic control' system, implement email protocol and a two-way communication process.

'Talking Business' – a two-way communication process, is now used to drive forward Amex's success in its key markets. In a deliberate step to involve broader key stakeholders, input is accepted from partner companies and suppliers.