

A bit about us

Founded in 1997 Hastings Direct is the brand for Hastings Insurance Services Limited. We provide insurance policies to 1,000,000+ UK customers. We are one of the largest local employers - circa 1250 people at our Bexhill head office and 350 staff at our Newmarket office.

Our vision and challenges

We are one of the fastest growing insurance brokers in the UK – doubling in size in the last three years. Such accelerated growth has been accompanied by a raft of changes, including cultural and organisational changes, all of which needed to be communicated and embedded in order to ensure continued high engagement in support of our overall vision launched in 2012: To Protect 1 in 10 of UK consumers by 2020.

Supporting the business objectives

We needed a vehicle that would embed the major changes across the business to help increase engagement and retain our people. Secondly, we needed to promote Hastings Direct as an 'employer of choice' in order to attract talent and fuel our growth.

We decided to harness our internal magazine, 'Harry's Extra' (HE) to help drive achievement of these objectives. HE's objectives were to:

- Increase employee engagement
- Increase staff retention
- Attract new talent

Run by our people, for our people

82% of our people I agree 'I look forward to receiving my copy of Harry's Extra'.

To ensure HE is truly the 'voice of our people', the 11-strong editorial team volunteer from across the business. The team is responsible for every aspect of the magazine bar the actual printing.

The team is given the editorial freedom to create content that supports the business objectives and meets the needs and interests of our people whilst specifically tasked to:

- Improve employees' understanding of different areas of the business and different staff roles (which have changed significantly in the last few months).
- Embed new company values and engage people in our new vision and objectives.
- Foster loyalty by celebrating individual and organisational successes.

Aligning the magazine to business needs

We use HE as a key recruitment and retention tool. Our editorial team regularly liaise with our HR Director to help support the HR team's objectives (for example, raising awareness about development opportunities).

To support our objective of attracting talent, we also produce a separate print run for our recruitment team so every prospective employee/applicant receives a copy promoting us as a great place to work.

Giving people a voice

To give our people ownership of their magazine, we encourage their participation:

More than half of those surveyed had submitted an idea/article/photo for HE.

A true reflection of life at Hastings Direct

*95% rate the regular features as good or better**

We wanted HE to reflect life here and regular features include:

*An April 2013 survey of 483 employees

- **Socials and events.**
- **Customer Hero** – celebrating staff whom customers have taken the time to praise
- **Customer Champion** – celebrating staff ideas that help improve our business

Breaking down barriers

89% of our people now agree 'our senior leadership team is accessible.'

HE is used to introduce new members of staff – including new leadership.

Frank and personal interviews with new leaders (conducted by staff), help put a face to leadership and break down barriers between our people and management.

Regular articles about different business areas (from the perspective of staff) also help smash silos and keep employees abreast of organisational changes.

87% of staff now agrees they have a 'good understanding of what other business areas do'*.

Engaging people in our vision and values

To help embed our values and drive engagement in our vision, HE features:

- **Celebration of individual success:** celebrating those people that embody our values and unsung heroes. *92% of our people agree "At Hastings Direct we celebrate our successes".*
- **Committee Corner:** a regular column dedicated to the activity of our community groups explains committees and charity work and how to get involved.
- **Business updates:** sharing any major company successes and how we're now performing against our vision. *72% of people say they prefer to receive business updates through HE*

As well as assessing employees' opinions of HE via our annual engagement survey, we recently undertook an extensive survey in April, to gauge the response to and impact of HE. 483 employees responded and the results have been impressive...

99% of employees read HE and 80% say they read most or all issues.
86% of employees rate HE as good or better overall.

Plus, in our latest annual engagement survey, HE was cited as one of the top channels employees use for company updates and was rated above both team briefings and the weekly email.

Driving engagement

As the graph in the supporting material shows, the survey revealed a **direct correlation between HE and employee engagement** - those who read HE more often demonstrate higher engagement scores.

Increased retention

Thanks to our increased employee engagement, staff attrition is now at a record low, having dropped nearly 10 percentage points since 2011 to an annualised rate of 24% (in line with the call centre industry average which is currently 24% according to Dimension Data (cca-global.com)).

In addition, as the above graph shows, *92% of our people agree 'I am proud to work at Hastings Direct'*.*.

Attracting talent

As mentioned, HE is now used as a key recruitment tool. As a result, we are attracting record numbers of applicants and role acceptance; helping support our continued growth.

*An April 2013 survey of 483 employees

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- In 2012, we received approximately 20 applications for every role advertised (an increase of 34% on 2011).
- In 2012, we successfully recruited an additional 550 people (a 150% increase on 2011).

By helping to drive increased engagement, workforce growth and retention, Harry's Extra is playing a key role in the achievement of our vision.

Budget: £9902

Expenses: Feedback incentives, competitions, stock images: £2000

Printing: £7902

There is no internal charging - no figures available for in-house editorial team/graphic designer.

***Results taken from April 2013 independent survey - all results presented by Boost Marketing.**