



ACCOUNTANT
IN BANKRUPTCY
SCOTLAND'S INSOLVENCY SERVICE

Internal Communications

Communication Strategy 2007-2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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**“The problem with communication ...
... is the *illusion* that it has been accomplished.”**

George Bernard Shaw



Internal Communications

Our Vision is...

To support the delivery of the Accountant in Bankruptcy's strategic vision of a modern Agency through an integrated and interactive communications culture. By 2011, a training and support network of core communication skills and tools will be embedded with excellence as standard. Employees and key delivery partners will become 'Champions' of best practice characterised by their support, flexibility, responsiveness, and customer centric values.

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1. Introduction to communication

This is our Internal Communications Strategy for 2007-2011, outlining how communication within Accountant in Bankruptcy (AiB) will support our overall vision for the business. Using the AiB Staff Survey 'Let's talk about Internal Communications 2007' as a baseline, it sets out a number of objectives for the Agency and provides a road map for our communication activities.

Our forecasted rate and scale of change over the next four years demands a highly effective and transparent communications framework to support the business. Although recognised, this need has not yet been set through current initiatives. The Internal Communications Strategy will help us aspire to our goals and validate investment in the necessary resources to support our journey.

The strategy illustrates how we will undertake a planned and sustained approach to communications in supporting the delivery of our core business: administering the bankruptcy process.

At its centre this signifies;

- **We** believe in the importance of reflecting our core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, translated into timely and relevant communications for our internal stakeholders.
- **We** recognise that our most valuable asset is our people and that for our Business Strategy to succeed our goals and objectives must be clearly communicated to those it affects.
- **We** are committed to improving our internal communications.

The Strategy will embrace new and existing improvement measures, incorporated into the internal communications function.

1.1 Consultation

Consultation was undertaken in performing an audit of the Agency's current communication activities to offer a 'bird's eye view' in defining strategic outputs. The objectives and activities presented here are the outcome of extensive internal examination, review of supporting research, and best practice investigation of sister agencies and departments in the Scottish and UK governments.

2. The bigger picture

As an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government (SG), the Agency has a number of key objectives including developing policy and overseeing the process of bankruptcy in Scotland, undertaking the function of Trustee when appointed by the Court and administering the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS).

Formally awarded Agency status in 2002, AiB is constantly evolving as an organisation both in operations and on the wider scope of strategic growth. Our environment is characterised by innovation, planned and organic, and by a major programme of change.

Born out of necessity, our pursuit of excellence has taken the lead from aggressive changes to Scotland's socio-economic landscape; AiB has witnessed an 81 per cent sustained growth in case workload since 2002, and the Government's drive for modern and efficient practices.

2.1 Supporting the business strategy

“AiB aim to become a more flexible and responsive organisation, combining its values and traditional strengths with a strong customer focus, process excellence, knowledge sharing and effective business management. AiB will continue to aspire to be influential, valued, and respected by achieving excellence in all it does.”

Vision for a Modern AiB, page 5, Business Strategy 2006-2011

The road map of our corporate vision is laid out in the Business Strategy (2006-2011), bringing together key objectives and change initiatives under five themes.



These themes in turn influence the direction and objectives of the Internal Communication Strategy.

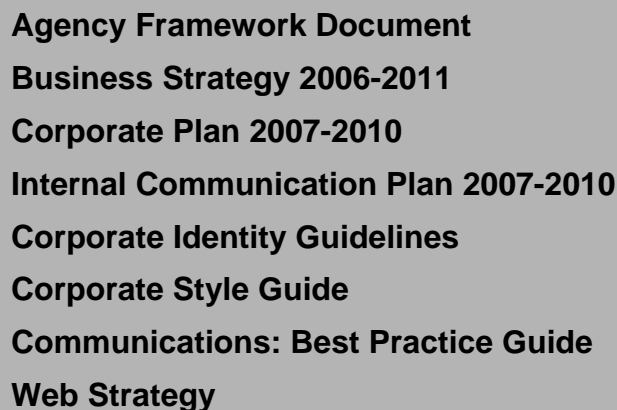
2.2 Corporate governance

Understanding where our business fits into the broader landscape of public service and the SG is important to the culture and ethos of our internal community.

Therefore, we take guidance from best practice as set out by the Government and follow their key principles for good communication¹ (Annex A).

To ensure excellence in internal service delivery we recognise our employees diverse communication needs and adhere to governing standards in “Making Information Accessible” (SAIF² - Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

This strategic document is intended as the first part of an integrated communications function, spanning all stakeholder and customer groups. It will be reinforced by the development of a communications toolkit to drive our objectives. Agency documentation recommended for communications reference includes:



- Agency Framework Document**
- Business Strategy 2006-2011**
- Corporate Plan 2007-2010**
- Internal Communication Plan 2007-2010**
- Corporate Identity Guidelines**
- Corporate Style Guide**
- Communications: Best Practice Guide**
- Web Strategy**

2.3 Why do we need an internal communications strategy?

The core impact of change: relocation, restructure, legislation and greater policy independence coupled with increased workload, has left the Agency in an inevitable state of flux. Although good communication is recognised as a precursor to effective management, the impact of this change environment has left a widely recognised need to strengthen our communication activities. Opinions were gathered in feedback from our staff away day, and more formally from the AiB communications survey and SG Employee Surveys '05 and '06.

¹ A Guide to Internal Communications in the Scottish Executive.

² Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAIF) as endorsed by the SE.

It is clear that, in this period of development and growth the need for robust communication is vital in moving the Agency forward. Aligning leader, staff and stakeholder expectations is fundamental to engaging support for, and contribution to, the future of AiB.

2.4 Purpose

A defined Internal Communications Strategy will ultimately inform best practice and act as a framework for a stronger communications culture by;

- providing a link between business objectives and communications planning and delivery;
- help explain how communications will support branch objectives, and which strategic choices have been taken and why;
- build a common understanding of AiB audiences and priorities across the communications function;
- create continuity in communications activity over an extended period;
- articulate objectives and measures of success when building a case for resources or evaluating performance;
- explore and mitigate communications risks.

All communications activity as detailed in the Internal Communications Plan (2007-2010), will be derived from the key objectives (section 3.4) ensuring effective, measurable delivery where applicable.

3. Communications in AiB

3.1 Strategic vision

The Internal Communications Strategy will support the delivery of the Accountant in Bankruptcy's strategic vision of a modern Agency through an integrated and interactive communications culture. By 2011, a training and support network of core communication skills and tools will be embedded with excellence as standard. Employees and key delivery partners will become 'champions' of best practice characterised by their support, flexibility, responsiveness, and customer centric values. rationale

3.2 Strategic priorities

The foundation for this Strategy is to capture key developmental areas for improving communication in AiB. The strategic priorities below have been identified from a series of audit activities carried out through various data capture exercises³. They will act as our main focus for development in the short-term, and provide a platform for our communication activity over the next four years.

Priorities

- Streamline and tailor communications that provide targeted information for staff, assisting the delivery of our core business standards and efficiencies.
- Increase engagement of staff in our business and the Agency's new role in policy development.
- Reinforce an open communications culture in AiB.
- Build AiB's internal community, and actively encourage staff to see themselves as part of the wider SG community.

3.3 Aim and goals

Our aim is to create a culture of internal communication that reflects one organisation with many valuable ways of working, helping employees understand individual and corporate communication responsibilities. The intention is to enable staff to work more effectively and efficiently towards the strategic aims of AiB.

³ Internal communications audit carried out 2nd Quarter 2007, overview provided in Annex B.

Specifically performance goals for the Strategy are:

1. Support communication as a priority issue for AiB and demonstrate our commitment to improving internal communication.
2. Install in stakeholders, a complete vision of the communications function and understanding of its core importance to the business.
3. Support the aims, objectives, and implementation requirements of the Business Strategy and Corporate Plan.
4. Establish and maintain clear and regular channels of communication with our internal audiences in a clearly branded, concise fashion, adhering to the Corporate Identity Guidelines and Corporate Style Guide.
5. Provide communications guidance to all AiB staff and internal stakeholders.
6. Promote our Environmental Policy, encouraging staff engagement in our culture and by making our communication practices environmentally sound.

3.4 Objectives

We will achieve these aims through targeted **objectives**:

1. Develop a global approach to communications and our communications culture:
 - a) Implement core communications training for all staff.
 - b) Procure strategic communications training for senior management.
 - c) Ensure people have the time and to communicate more effectively.
 - d) Standardise job titles across the organisation.
2. Endorse the current redesign and development of the intranet as the main internal communication channel and information tool.
 - a) Establish a Web Editorial Group to provide technical support and maintenance to the intranet.
 - b) Develop a tailored, thematic content structure to fit AiB business requirements.

- c) Provide on-going development and flexible response systems to mirror the changing needs of the business and staff.
- 3.** Create an integrated, accessible internal communications function to:
- a) manage and oversee the Internal Communications Strategy and implementation and advise on specific actions or activities.
 - b) support/coordinate staff-related communications e.g. staff newsletter, web pages, events, project communications, and Agency announcements
- 4.** Strengthen/refine our face-to-face communications to add value to information transaction:
- a) Develop and implement a core information cascade and team briefing process throughout the Agency, supported by the Executive Management Team initiating a mechanism at a senior level.
- 5.** Reinforce credibility and authority of communicators within the Agency:
- b) Reinforce line manager as reliable channel for communications:
 - a) Develop a clear set of communication guidelines and support for all managers.
 - c) Brand internal communication channels and assign ownership of defined channel usage.
 - b) Create best practice guide and communications toolkit.
- 6.** Develop and mature Agency e-communications:
- a) Redevelop and improve internal Agency e-communications; newsletter (Changing Times), Agency announcements.
 - b) Establish an Editorial Group responsible for the management and delivery of the Agency newsletter.
 - c) Work with other SG agencies/departments to share best practice and information.

- 7.** Engage staff in, and to contribute towards, strategic development of the business:
 - a) Establish recognised feedback mechanisms to enable staff to contribute to business development.
 - b) Ensure that staff are aware of changes to policy and the impact on the business and their roles by identifying and communicating policy changes.
 - c) Establish regulatory and knowledge-sharing values in staff.
 - d) Make provision for staggered practical sessions with business teams and groups.

- 8.** Engage and empower staff in their day-to-day activities and responsibilities:
 - a) Embed regular performance update sessions.
 - b) Celebrate success in a consistent manner.
 - c) Strengthen social activities and involvement.

- 9.** Identify core communication channels and streamline outputs to provide concise and relevant information.

4. Mapping our communications landscape

To guide our communications, we need to ensure we give the right information (**What?**) to the right people (**Who?**) at the right time and in the right way (**How?**).

4.1 What?

Key messages help stakeholders "cut through the noise" and focus staff on what is important to them and the Agency. They help shape the perception of AiB, ensuring consistency and coherence in message reception even when communicated through a number of channels.

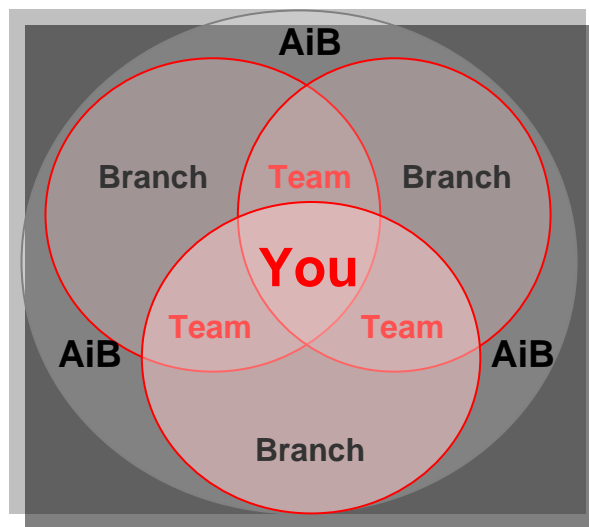
AiB aim to communicate that;

- **We** are here to serve the people of Scotland
 - as an integral part of the Government.
 - through excellence in the administration of the bankruptcy process.
- Our staff are our most important resource; **we** are fully committed to developing and investing in their future as part of our future.
- **We** will provide an efficient and fair service to all, recognising diversity in the community and treating everyone we come into contact with in the course of our day-to-day business with dignity and respect.
- **We** are committed to transforming the way management, staff, customers and suppliers work and interact with technology, and will invest in innovative and efficient management systems for our business.
- **We** are committed to reducing the harmful effect we have on the environment.

4.2 Who?

AiB is made up of a number of audience groups. Vertically we are divided into management board, senior management, middle management, and all staff. We also recognise branch and team structures, internal committees and groups and project teams/users as separate audience clusters.

We will identify and target the relevant internal audiences in all our communications, providing information tailored to their roles and needs. Communications will be monitored for content, tone and language to ensure information is clear and fit for its audience(s).



AiB acknowledges and supports both organic streams and more formal pathways in Agency information exchanges. This diagram serves to explain only some of the merging streams but does not illustrate all of the communication paths in AiB.

By understanding how information flows within our organisation, and recognising the multiple communication streams, we can help reduce potential **barriers** to effective communication (Annex C).

4.3 How?

Communication in AiB occurs via three mediums; electronic, face-2-face, and publication. Together they will be interpreted as a single voice of AiB, providing key measurable outcomes of the Strategy. AiB internal channels available for communicating with the business are provided, with function requirements and areas for improvement, in Annex D.

Electronic communication

e-Communication is viewed as the most productive method to broadcast information in AiB therefore it is important that clear guidelines are available and adhered to when communicating through related channels. Currently email usage rates are high and diluted in business vs. social exchange. We will reduce the volume of email and strengthen its business application while reducing overload. Authorisation of internal distribution lists will be limited to relevant business teams and persons.

Face-2-face

As with all communication activities, the information and messages communicated via face-2-face channels will maintain consistency in content, style, approach and output as much as our other forms of communication. We will introduce coordinated information releases to enhance the reliability and confidence in communications will be implemented. Staff will be trained on effective communication and correct communications processes.

Agency publications (including e-Newsletter)

Agency publications are an important way to improve understanding the services of, and developments in, the business. They are an accessible/digestible source of reference for staff. At present internal publications are produced through various business areas. Whilst it is not practical to bring all these activities under one service, there is a need for coordination and an element of oversight. Use of publications will be enhanced by improved positioning via our intranet and information sessions.

4.4 Branding, Logo's and Legislation

Integral to every publication the Agency produces is the corporate identity - the AiB image - the reputation it portrays. Our brand is defined in our Corporate Identity Guidelines, it is the one 'mark' or 'logo' that staff will automatically associate with official Agency publications/literature and should be apparent in all material produced. The Agency will ensure that the AiB logo is properly applied in all cases and that the SG logo and brand is applied in all relevant internal communication materials.

Legislation and requirements placed on providing and collating information such as data protection, freedom of information and equalities must be applied consistently across the Agency when we produce corporate literature of any kind.

5. Making the strategy work

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

Effective communications require time, energy and commitment from all staff. To make this strategy works it is important that staff at all levels recognise the part they must play.

In order to assist in successful implementation the following will be important:

- The strategy will be endorsed by the Strategic Board, Executive Management Team and the Senior Management Team, with explicit commitment from those members to make it work.
- Improved communications will be part of the objectives of the Strategic Board, and measured objectives as part of the appraisal process for all staff.

A detailed list of roles and priorities is provided in Annex E; each level within the business has clearly defined performance indicators.

5.2 Evaluation and amendment

The 2007 audit focused on AiB staff as our internal stakeholders in developing the Internal Communications Strategy. This population was determined as the core business need at the time of project initiation; however internal stakeholders are not exclusive to AiB staff and contractors. An interim review and evaluation should be carried out in 2008 to consider a case for other potential internal stakeholders i.e. Agents and Trustees, Scottish Government staff.

Planned evaluation will allow us to determine threats, opportunities and successes using the first staff survey (Let's talk about Internal Communication 2007) as a benchmark in setting targets for following years.

The creation of a dedicated communications function will provide management and assessment of findings. It will be responsible for any modifications or amendments made to the internal communication action plan. The Strategy will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is effective and has been implemented successfully.

5.3 Resources

The developments and objectives illustrated are not intended to be rigid, but rather, are a road map for improving communication, developing a comprehensive two-way communication program, and building staff support.

The Internal Communication Strategy will not be able to be implemented fully without both additional financial and staff resources. To be fully effective this strategy will need committed communications resource(s), most notably to;

- ▮ support the volume of change programme communication projected.
- ▮ ensure message and style consistency in promoting a coherent approach to communication.
- ▮ support the redevelopment of the Intranet with web publication and maintenance skills.
- ▮ structure/provide communication training throughout the organisation, in required level of expertise.

Communications support can be supplemented by peer consultation with sister agencies and departments of the SG.

6. Action plan

An Action Plan for the implementation of the Internal Communication Strategy will be developed following review and agreement by the Strategic Board, and will be used to implement the Strategy over the next four years.

Annex A Guiding principles

The **key principles** of good internal communications are:

- Be clear** - get messages across simply, clearly and with any relevant facts to minimise confusion.
- Good timing** - providing the information at a time when it is most useful to the receiver.
- Be consistent** - keeping information regularly updated, in a recurring style and through familiar channels.
- Have integrity** - keeping information factual, concise and leave room for feedback.
- Be appropriate** - the right messages for the right people in the right way.
- Always respond** - reflecting the feedback of your audience creates a better sense of involvement.
- Be honest** - reporting what is happening, not what you think is happening.

Annex B Communications audit and staff consultation

An internal communications audit was carried out over a six month period using the following methods;

- Semi-structured interviews with senior staff
- Review of internal documentation
- Participant observation
- Development of communication materials and monitored response
- Staff survey (Let's Talk about Internal Communications, 2007)

Communication issues and priorities were identified at senior level to inform the initial structure of the research and, through the results, lend support for short term strategic direction. Deeper analysis of observed communication practices (qualitative research) referenced against results of the AiB Staff Survey (qualitative and quantitative) enabled us to identify current practice, satisfaction levels and areas for improvement.

Response levels were lower than anticipated (35%) considering the geography of staff and size of the Agency. The launch of our new case management system just prior to the survey was given consideration as potentially impacting on results. However the lack of participation was viewed to be as significant as the results themselves. They highlighted recurring concern over perceived interest and the level of engagement of staff in the business (findings supported by the SE Employee Survey's '05 and '06).

AiB findings were compared with similar public service communications guidance and audit reports to determine common issues and best practice, ultimately to produce a strategy 'fit for purpose'.

Key findings of the staff survey are presented below:

- Lack of **resources** to inform and produce communication materials have resulted in inconsistent messages and perceived intention of the communication. This is evident in all forms of communications, including electronic and written. However, staff do believe they communicate

effectively (100%) but would also be keen to improve their communication **abilities** (87%).

- ▀ ‘Pockets’ of good practice do exist but are affected by variability in **content, style, and timeliness** of cascaded information. This is particularly evident in team meetings where current communication practices appear to have mainly developed organically, and therefore are hindered by silo approaches. ‘Trickle down’ effect caused the most frustration in receiving information about work and the business.
- ▀ Personal email (26%) and unplanned meetings (23%) are the **tools** used most by staff when communicating. However staff believe meetings; either in a one-2-one or team format, are the best communication **method**.
- ▀ Lack of **ownership** of the communications function has left staff unsure of who produced various internal communications and therefore their **credibility**. A concern was expressed over information disseminated from senior managers known to be incorrect at the time it was received. Lack of ownership and therefore perceived authority is also evident in the non-compliance with the limited corporate style guidance available to staff – email signature i.e. Arial font, 12pt, colour Black.
- ▀ Line managers were found to be the greatest **information source**, 18 per cent above the field average, and highly rated as a reliable information source (90%).
- ▀ Overload of non-**targeted** information sent by email causes frustration and interrupt staffs working pattern. Staff widely used the ‘ask everyone’ approach even when there is the facility to target relevant individuals or groups. This is compounded by no dedicated or appropriate **channel** for communicating personal/social interests in the Agency. However, staff do show appreciation for receivers not affected or interested in their communication by adding a standardised apology message (used throughout the agency).
- ▀ A large proportion of staff (81%) would welcome improvements in internal communication. This is reinforced by the perceived low **quality** of current general communication (63%). Results also found that although the quality of communication with line managers is rated highly (81%), “communication with senior managers” show congested response from middle management - average 90% positive response for quality at senior (B3) and administrative levels (A2, A3) compared to 46% for middle management (B1, B2).

- Response to providing **feedback** shows staff are not aware of clear channels and look for guidance on the correct **methods**/approach for feeding-back their opinions/suggestions. But, they do believe that their opinions count at work (69%), that their feedback is acted upon (64%) and that they can make a difference to AiB (79%).
- Inter-team and cross branch communication is frequent and routine, but staff feel that more communication is required. Facilities Management were found to be the team most communicated with in the Agency. Both Corporate Services (CS) and Case Operations (COB) show a need for more communication with each other, however COB also show a need for more communication within their branch.
- Communication on aspects of the change programme and technology development was common in staff **information needs**, as well as role specific information. Information on wider business issues and developments would be best communicated monthly, while updates and job specific information sessions/meetings would be preferred on a weekly basis - or more often as required.

Annex C Barriers to communication

Common barriers, and potential risks identified in AiB can be avoided by following the guidance below.

Avoid barrier by;

1. Establish clear lines of responsibility

Clear lines of responsibility are important to help staff work efficiently. Line managers will provide a list of specific tasks and responsibilities, as well as benchmarks that indicate a tasks successful completion. Weekly team meetings provide opportunities to review activity, assess progress, and monitor accountability. In addition, regular meetings and open communication allow minor challenges to be addressed before they become major problems.

2. Preempt how communication will be filtered by the audience

Equipment or environmental noise blocks clear communication. The sender and the receiver must both be able to concentrate on the messages being sent to each other. To ensure receptiveness to communications, whatever the channel or method chosen for sending communication, thought will be given to who needs to receive the message, when they must receive the message and what action must result from the message.

3. Avoid information overload

Too much information about the same subject matter may be confusing, and information that is not relevant to the receiver will reduce message reception. It is better to have one e-mail from the sender which includes all the information in clear and simple form with only the information the receiver wants and needs.

4. Use Plain English where possible to ensure clarity

Consider the tone and level of your communications. By structuring your language in clear simplistic sentences, the receiver will be able to easily understand what you are saying.

5. Ask for feedback to ensure message(s) has been received accurately

Done by the sender, as a word of confirmation by using close ended questions such as "Did you understand what I just said?" or "Is what I said clear to you?", or using an open ended question to have the receiver summarise the message. This results in the sender knowing the receiver has fully understood what is being communicated.

6. Listen actively when receiving feedback

Place yourself in the senders position and try to understand exactly what they are trying to convey to you. The receiver is trying to understand fully what the sender is trying to say, so putting the receiver in the senders point of view makes understanding much easier.

Barriers to effective communication are common when planning is overlooked in the information transaction process. Planning can easily be structured by asking four key questions of your intended communication:



Annex D Internal Communication Channels

AiB Intranet

The intranet is a significant and important communication channel, and will have a dual function in AiB: an archiving tool for Agency e-communications and news broadcasts; and the main channel of internal communication. The intranet will contribute to improving inter-branch knowledge and information transfer.

Information will be structured thematically to increase accessibility and usability.

- ▀ Each business area should have updated information showing operational business, the staff, new developments, news items, successes etc. Relevant minutes from meetings and committees will be posted on the web site for staff and the lines of communication for feedback made clear.
- ▀ The intranet is currently under redesign and development.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Coordination and the sharing** of information and resources among business areas and the web maintenance resource through regular update meetings.
- **Common Look and Feel** - in anticipation of content management tools being made widely available, AiB web publication guidance and templates will need to be developed and distributed to assist business users. Consideration for development of a Corporate Web-Identity Policy is required.
- **Content Management** - consultation and performance appraisals will be necessary to determine performance and durability of the intranet structure and content. Staff consultation and review will be incorporated into the annual communication evaluation and supported by a dedicated feedback method via the intranet.

Email

The Agency will use email as a mechanism for ad hoc communication between individuals and groups. Authorised staff will be encouraged to utilise the available distribution lists via Microsoft Outlook, and the use of audience targeting to limit mass communication.

- ▶ Line managers will ensure that the target audience is considered by staff and monitor their group communications.
- ▶ All communication via email with corporate value is saved into the relevant file in Objective (eRDM).

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Guidance** - the Agency will provide quick reference guides to accompany SE SCOTS Connect IT Code of Conduct, on the effective and responsible use of email.
- **e-Signatures** - corporate e-signature guidance will be provided to all staff to ensure all email communication is uniform in style and format.
- **User authority** - access to “AiB” and “Pennyburn Road” distribution lists will be limited to key business users by January 2008.

e-Bulletins

e-bulletins will be seen as a clear channel for important news updates and senior staff messages to be cascaded to all staff as needed. They provide a real time solution to group based communications. Use of independently branded stationery will enable quick recognition and credibility to e-messaging.

- ▶ Each business area will take ownership of corporate messages to be broadcast, and ensure staff are kept aware of key changes and impacts to the Agency.
- ▶ Information presented will be accurate and factual.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **e-Stationery** - corporate **branded e-stationery** will be distributed to the relevant user groups for use in distributing information to the business groups and all staff.
- **Guidance** - a section of the Corporate Style Guidelines will include best practice information on writing concise, functional bulletins as a support tool for the relevant group.

Team Briefing/Meetings/One-2-Ones

Team briefings/meetings/one-2-ones are an effective way of sharing information among employees on a personal basis, giving staff the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback in relation to the topics being discussed. They are the preferred method of communication among AiB staff and will be used as appropriate.

- ▮ They enable quick feedback and response to strengthen reliability and credibility of information.
- ▮ Improve downward, upward and sideways communications throughout the organisation and enable clarity and consistency of direction and information from senior management.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Validation** - strengthening/refining our 'meetings culture' by clarifying what information validates a meeting, what the meeting should cover and what outputs are required from it.
- **Process** - Development and implementation of core information cascade and team briefing processes. Senior staff members will be consulted on best practice methods to establish a singular process applicable to the whole business.
- **Coordination** - coordination and agreement of key messages to be communicated to staff and broadcast in a rigid framework. This will limit the reliance on information through the 'grapevine' and remove uncertainty.

Staff Assembly

The Agency will continue to utilise this channel as a wide-scale communication method. Staff assembly will be used for driving home key messages regarding our business and presenting important events or developments through a single channel to staff.

- ▮ Channel will be maintained as a infrequent tool to broadcast information ensuring retention of importance, and assign weight to assembly topic i.e. presence of the AiB Chief Executive.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Communications Planner** - a Communications Planner will be designed to assist diary and impact coordination for the Agency. This will help reduce information overload and confusion as key milestones and are reached.
- **Messages** - key messages and agendas will be agreed annually to support business milestones.

Induction and Training

An induction pack is being redeveloped for new staff that join the Agency. This includes a range of information from building facilities to what each part of the business does. An induction training programme will continue to support the pack for each new member of staff.

- ▮ Core business information and background is provided with highlights on each of the support areas.
- ▮ Safety, security and walkthrough talks complete the initial induction process.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Personal Induction Pack** - The creation of a stand alone induction process that will account for 'in between' period of recruitment intake, when limited numbers of staff require induction.
- **Extended induction programme** - consideration for developing a 'work experience' programme for new staff, allowing them to witness team responsibilities first-hand.

Changing Times (AiB e-Newsletter)

The recent introduction of our Changing Times newsletter as a communication tool for the Change Programme, has been received well among staff. The newsletter carried articles written by key project members to inform staff of project developments and impacts. Staff take up has been slow but findings from the recent audit show it achieves its key purpose of informing staff in a simple, but effective manner.

- ▮ Published and sent electronically, it is a colourful and targeted communication tool, aimed at broadcasting information in an informal tone and digestible layout.
- ▮ Created to meet information requirements for updates on change initiatives, it encourages staff to take interest in business areas other than their own.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Upgrade** - to enable this channel to be fully utilised, redesign and development of the format and scope of the newsletter is planned, to include all Agency news and information. The newsletter will move from email to being web-enabled, reducing file size on inboxes and allowing the information to be archived for future reference.
- **Editorial Group** - an Editorial Group will be formed of representatives across the organisation at all levels. This will encourage staff development and involvement as well as maintain the ethos of the newsletter – “by staff, for staff”.

Branch Reports

Currently Case Operations staff needs are being met through weekly and monthly reports. These reports are specific to technical case data and encourage knowledge sharing among COB staff. At present they are a simple collation of key items identified by staff and statistical data.

- ▮ Information provided by the reports is regularly repeated in weekly team meetings.
- ▮ Information can be technically heavy to understand for lower grade staff and non-branch interested parties.

Development will focus on key areas:

- **Evaluation** – assessment of information needs of staff in COB and review possible distribution methods and style.
- **Usability** – develop a clear format and structure to allow for quick and easy replication that makes information accessible to its audience.
- **Streamline information** – Evaluate and remove unnecessary duplication in communication, provide a linked agenda to weekly team meetings.
- **Expansion** – feasibility study of uptake in remaining branches.

Technical Manuals

Technical manuals provide guidance on business areas and requirements of staff. The manuals are currently under review and redesign to accommodate changes to the structure of the business and policy development. When finalised we will ensure technical publications are;

- ▮ Reliable in terms of relevant, correct and consistent information.
- ▮ Recognised by their common basic lay-out.
- ▮ Readily available via the intranet.

Annex E Roles and responsibilities for communication

Strategic Board and Executive Management Team

Roles

- ▮ Approve the Internal Communications Strategy and support communications activities.
- ▮ Ensure that all important issues are communicated to staff in the organisation in a timely and accurate manner.
- ▮ Agree the messages and the methods of appropriate communication.
- ▮ Ensure that all information, as far as possible, is communicated internally before externally.
- ▮ Ensure that management behaviour and style is consistent with the principles in this document.
- ▮ Work in partnership with staff and their representatives, to ensure the strategy works.
- ▮ Develop and encourage relationships between individuals, teams and business units inside AiB.

Priorities

- Act as spokespeople where necessary and appropriate.
- Implement effective communications methods to ensure the flow of information to all levels of the organisation.
- Communicate a clear sense of purpose and direction.
- Input wider organisational/ departmental vision into local strategies to tie into holistic vision.
- Establish clear, consistent communication channels through teams.
- Encourage high quality internal communications throughout teams.
- Encourage feedback.
- High visibility and availability to all.
- Consider communication skills training for yourselves and others.

Senior Management Team

Roles

- To ensure that methods exist in the Agency to allow free flow of information, upward and downwards.
- To ensure that staffs' views are considered, and responses given where appropriate.
- To identify potential blocks to communication within the Agency and aim to remedy them.
- To check out conflicting information and to stop false rumours circulating.
- To ensure that all managers are trained in communication skills.
- Regularly talk face to face with individuals and groups to give support and recognition of performance.
- Be approachable, listening to and giving feedback on performance.
- Engage and maintain relationships with internal stakeholders.

Priorities

- Work with middle management to develop good internal communication links at local and personal level.
- Contribute fully to individual and team meetings and establish feedback channels.
- Input into team communications.
- Consider communication skills training for yourself and others.

Operational Managers

Roles

- To ensure that the opportunity exists for each member of staff to receive and give information.
- To take responsibility for delivering information, and obtaining the views of staff, in a consistent manner.
- To ensure personal development for yourself and your staff in communication skills.
- To identify potential blocks to communication within the Agency and aim to remedy them.
- To check out conflicting information and to stop false rumours circulating.
- Regularly talk face to face with individuals and groups to give support and recognition of performance.
- Be approachable, listening to and giving feedback on performance
- Engage and maintain relationships with internal stakeholders.

Priorities

- With line manager work to develop good internal communication links at local and personal level.
- Contribute fully to individual and team meetings and establish feedback channels.
- Input into team communications.
- Consider communication skills training for yourself and others.

Committee and Group Representatives

Roles

- To ensure that the information sent to you is communicated to members.
- To feedback the views of staff through formal and informal methods.
- To clarify conflicting information and messages and to attempt to stop false rumours circulating.
- To work with managers in ensuring that the strategy actually works, and to work together in dealing with problems.

Priorities

- With senior manager and committee/group members, work to develop good internal communication links at local and personal level.
- Contribute fully to informing members and relevant areas of the business and establishing feedback channels.
- Input into Agency communications.
- Determine messages and appropriate communication methods.

Administrative Staff

Roles

- Take the opportunity provided by the various methods of communication to maintain an awareness of the key issues affecting the Agency/team.
- Clarify any areas of mis - or non-understanding with a manager.
- To raise any points of concern with a manager.
- Build and maintain good working relationships with colleagues.
- Create effective communications to be understood by diverse audiences both in writing and verbally.
- Manage information by mastering the technology for storing, retrieving and sharing records and information.

Priorities

- Work with line manager to establish clear communication lines.
- Input into team communications.
- Consider communication skills training for yourself.
- Familiarity and use of core internal communications methods for information.

