

Changing of the guard



The brief

Our client, a large military contractor, initiated a new contract between themselves and a New Zealand government agency that would see the two organisations form a new kind of partnership. That partnership would require a significant amount of change on both sides, in order to increase efficiencies. Our client was obligated to transform its organisation from a primary blue-collar workforce provider of maintenance services to a collaborative, asset management partner.

After 18 months, there was criticism that key stakeholders didn't know enough about what our client was doing (in terms of transformation to the new model). There were frustrations with the process and how quickly change was happening. There was a lack of communications between the two entities. The government agency was questioning the value of the partnership. There was a need to show that change was happening, and to illuminate progress.

The Wright approach

We embarked on a programme to rebuild our client's reputation.

After interviewing key stakeholders, we presented our client with a stakeholder engagement report that provided frank feedback and identified gaps in communications and knowledge sharing.

We identified that a significant amount of frustration could be solved by simply increasing the quality and frequency of communications. We then formulated a plan, working with our client's in-house team, to write and produce a series of newsletters that better explained the process of transformation that was taking place. These newsletters covered the advances and progress made and was distributed to stakeholders on both teams.

We initiated and facilitated a series of Quarterly Updates that allowed both teams to come together in person for informative and collaborative updates on how the process of transformation was tracking.

Wright Communications also reviewed and edited a new fortnightly email to staff from the CEO and provided writing and editing assistance for an internal newsletter.

In addition, we identified stories that would make good articles for relevant industry magazines, ensuring the widest distribution of good news.

We also facilitated a series of stakeholder engagement meetings headed by an expert on our Wright Communications team that taught our client's key managers the foundations of effective stakeholder engagement. As a result, a series of joint meetings were held between our client and their customer to keep both sides abreast of developments and progress.

During this period, our client's CEO retired and a new CEO was brought in from abroad. Wright Communications advised on communications strategy for the new leadership and was once again engaged to carry out a stakeholder relationship survey, this time expanded to three times the number of participants and with a more extensive questionnaire.

Outcomes

The conclusion of the second survey shows that our client's key stakeholders recognise the vast improvement in communications between the two organisations. The joint newsletter was praised and widely read and Wright Communications has been requested to facilitate and run a second stakeholder engagement workshop, as proof of the value of the first. The relationship between the two entities is on more solid ground, and our customer can move forward with new, exciting projects with confidence.