

## Team



IoIC  
Awards  
2024



## Best Small Agency (1-10 people)

### ***Culture Club***

We're a small but mighty culture change agency founded in 2018 by Nikki Burslam and Jodi Speight. You might recognise us as last year's proud Best Agency award winner.

In 2023, despite market challenges, team transitions, and the opening of a new office, The Culture Club thrived once again, achieving a steady \$1.5m turnover for the second consecutive year.

We won six new clients, retained 90% of clients (we got rid of one through our choice), and executed some of our biggest and most successful projects to date.

Whilst juggling 21 projects for 13 clients (with just nine team members), we've also worked hard to give back to the community with a series of sold-out free events and talks.

Whether it's our client projects or our own events there's one thing that they have in common. We rip up the rulebook, say no to boring, and fuse strategic thinking with relentless creativity. And we deliver the final result with excellence. Always.

### ***HarknessKennett***

HarknessKennett (est. 2002) is a boutique agency specialising in internal communications (IC) consultancy and resourcing. Its clients list spans 34 countries, from multinational corporates to UK-based charities. With a core team of five employees and three associates supporting a close community of recruitment candidates, the agency enjoys a family feel.

2023 was a year of dramatic contrast. HarknessKennett celebrated its 21st birthday but tragically lost one of its founding partners to cancer. Her legacy lives on in the team's passion for and commitment to the IC profession. With a new MD, promoted internally, and a new permanent administrator, the agency continued to punch above its weight.

Over the year, it delivered extensive research programmes for huge organisations; tailored its new IC team training programme for a global healthcare leader; resourced day-rate contractors, interim and permanent recruits for clients; and supported the professional development of staff, candidates, clients and IC peers.



## Best Medium Agency (11-30 people)

### ***The Engage Group***

The Engage Group is the proud pioneer of internal communication across the Middle East. We are driven by our unwavering belief that when employees succeed, organisations succeed. Over the past 11 years, we've been working hard to get organisations to prioritise internal communication as a strategic function. We are thrilled that our work is starting to pay dividends.

This entry provides a snapshot behind the scenes of Engage - our purpose, our people, our values. It also outlines our unique approach to elevating internal comms and shares a detailed case study on how we are supporting our clients to establish thriving IC functions from scratch. We are proud that our work can hold itself up to the highest international standards while meeting local cultural needs. And most importantly, we are proud that our work is positively impacting employees in workplaces across the region and beyond.

### ***Sequel Group***

Colleagues, clients, community – a firm focus on the '3c's' is the foundation on which Sequel has built a successful business. Now an employee-owned organisation, Sequel continues to set standards in internal communication through its collegiate approach, skills set second to none, an unwavering commitment to do the best for clients and a desire to be a force for good in the local community.



## Best Large Agency (30+ people)

### **H&H**

What matters to everyone at H&H, really matters. Always has. From our embryo team of 2.5 folks back in 2010, to our current thriving team of 30-ish. How we do what we do, is as important to us as what we do.

A community of ego-less, enthusiastic folks, we blend our diverse talents, experiences and perspectives to create new possibilities in the world of Internal Communications.

We believe friendliness, openness and kindness is the best way to do...well anything. It promotes teamwork, stimulates creativity, and encourages innovation. Our clients think the same too – it's what they say they value most about working with H&H.

For 14 years we've been creating possibilities so others can see what's possible for them. Alone, we cannot evolve the world of IC, but we can cast stones across the waters and create many positive ripples. Opening the door to endless new opportunities.



## Best In-House Team 1-5 people

### ***Allianz Commercial Communications Team***

In 2023, AGCS became Allianz Commercial. This seems simple, but in practice it was anything but. The Internal Communications team successfully tackled transformation, cultural, leadership and organizational challenges over a tumultuous year. Not only was the team tasked with leading the transformation, but also was involved in and impacted by it. Unprecedented in the range, scope, complexity and scale of activity, 2023 stretched our abilities and brought out the best – it was a remarkable year for the team.

The team deserves commendation for delivering results we are proud of, to an excellent standard in uncertain and difficult circumstances, for leveraging relationships to broaden our scope in a new and unclear situation, and for keeping team spirit in the face of challenges not previously encountered. We are usually in the background - supporting, enabling, facilitating, engaging, managing – but it is time for us to get the recognition we deserve.

### ***Mars Wrigley UK Internal Communications Team***

The Mars Wrigley UK Internal Comms Team work with some of our best loved brands from the Mars bar to the mighty Malteser. Based in Slough, the team look after internal communications for the UK confectionary business.

The small but mighty team strive to excite and engage in their communications – bringing to life the unique culture in Mars - where employees are known as Associates.

Over the past year they've worked to enhance and strengthen understanding of the UK strategy, embed the new company purpose and work proactively with stakeholders to foster a strong collaboration culture.

### ***Queen's University Belfast's Internal Communications Team***

2023 saw Queen's University Belfast's two-person Internal Communications Team successfully deliver crisis mitigation internal communications and campaigns across multiple fronts, while also delivering excellence in a range of proactive campaigns and communications in support of strategic and operational objectives, achieved through the outstanding leadership, collaboration and skill-set within the team. This included the development and co-production of an internal documentary in partnership with an Emmy-nominated documentary production company. The team's robust and advanced approach to internal communications measurement and reporting has significantly raised the profile of the function internally within the University.



### ***Siemens Great Britain and Ireland Internal Communications Team***

The Siemens Great Britain and Ireland Internal Communications Team has been a catalyst for change since fully forming in January 2023. In the rapidly changing and dynamic technology industry, their focus has been to connect colleagues with Siemens' mission to transform the everyday for everyone.

Utilising a multi-strand approach, the team devised a powerful annual programme aligned to Siemens' strategic priorities, to drive customer impact, empower employees, embrace a growth mindset, and encourage cross-business knowledge sharing of how they deliver technology with purpose.

Their achievements are a result of their collaborative teamwork, commitment to excellence in every project, and focus on strategic business outcomes.

### ***Speedy Hire People Engagement and Internal Communications Team***

Listening to colleagues to drive a People First culture

We are a small team that make a BIG impact!

Our People Engagement and Internal Communications Team sit at the heart of the Speedy Hire business, engaging daily with 3,500 colleagues (40% deskless) nationwide.

Speedy by name and Speedy by nature; the team are a formidable force who don't stop! From humble beginnings two years ago, we've gone from strength to strength, helping to shape and revolutionise the company's People First culture and approach to communication.

Over the last 12 months we have given ALL colleagues a voice and listened with intent to what they told us. And, as a result we refreshed our internal communications strategy, evolving our channel mix in response to feedback, with a clear goal to make leaders more visible; connect with - and engage - our deskless workers; and ultimately help create an authentic People First culture powered by transformative communications.



## Best In-House Team 6-10 people

### ***Colt Technology Services Internal Communications Team***

2023 was a year of significant change for Colt. With an acquisition of another company fast approaching and a digital transformation programme we needed to rally our people around, we knew we had challenges ahead. Our mission was to keep our people engaged, focused on delivering for the business and feel excited for the future.

Through careful planning, working closely with our executive team and key stakeholders, and a good dose of hard work and creativity, we exceeded the high performing norm in an industry culture survey and increased sustainable engagement by 3% to 90 in our annual people survey.

### ***Coventry Building Society's Colleague Comms Team***

As a team of six, we achieved a huge amount of high-quality work and impact in 2023.

We balanced strategic and big delivery with keeping our BAU going to a high standard. All at a low cost using our own creativity and in-house effort. And all related to our and the Society's goals.

Without a doubt, our work contributes to the success of the organisation. We really capture our Society shared goal – to create an inclusive and inspiring workplace and value proposition.

We think something that really stands us apart is the commitment to share our knowledge and skills too – not only at the Society but across the financial services sector and internal comms profession.

We are passionate about our role, about the Society and about the future of internal comms.

### ***Tesco Bank, People Communications Team***

The Tesco Bank People Communications team is an amazing in-house team. Against a backdrop of company-wide transformation and intense media speculation about a potential sale of the Bank, we have transformed the way we communicate openly and honestly with colleagues to drive high levels of engagement and pride. In what has been a very challenging year, we have also worked on developing ourselves and pivoting our offering to the business, focusing on our strategic value and becoming trusted advisers. Our communications strategy, grounded in colleague feedback, has given the team purpose and clear priorities so we are happier in our work. Bank wide Great Place to Work scores have increased by +9 to 81%, 83% understand how their role contributes to our purpose and our channels are out-performing targets showing how colleagues looked to us to provide them with the information they needed during the change.



## Best In-House Team 10+ people

### ***NFU Mutual Internal Communications Team***

NFU Mutual is a company that offers a wide range of products including general insurance, life, pensions, and investments. It serves its customers through a network of around 300 agencies across the UK and employs around 4,500 employees in its regional service centres and Head Office.

The Internal Communications team (IC team), made up of 16 colleagues, work as part of a wider Communications and Reputation team. In 2023, the IC team focused on responding to the newly established hybrid working patterns, by future-proofing our communications and channels, ensuring visibility of leaders in a virtual world, and encouraging a sense of belonging amongst all employees.

There were also key business objectives in 2023, including to launch and embed the revised company-wide business strategy, and building trust and engagement in a newly appointed Executive leadership team. The IC team also created and launched a new SharePoint hosted intranet, a new employee-generated personal blog campaign and supported communications to the network of NFU Mutual Agents and their teams around the UK.

### ***Virgin Money Colleague Communications Team***

The Virgin Money Colleague Communications team has a singular mission – to connect Virgin Money’s c7000 colleagues to the bank’s purpose and strategy through people-focused storytelling, delivered in a playful, bold, and distinctly Virgin way.

Over the course of 2023, the team went on a transformational journey in pursuit of that central mission, investing in talent and adopting agile ways of working to set itself grounding and propulsive objectives and key results.

So focused, the team creates content that Virgin Money colleagues would want to consume in their spare time. This inspired the creation of The Vault, a subscription-worthy video channel that brings our strategy to life in a way that no other medium can.

But we can only inspire our colleagues if we feel inspired ourselves, so we’ve worked hard to make our team a safe, inclusive and fun environment, where challenge is welcomed and constructive feedback normalised. We’re proud of our history, and ready for the future.





## Best Public Sector or Not for Profit Team 1-5 people

### ***Estates Communications & Engagement Team at the University of Glasgow***

In just two years, the University of Glasgow Estates Communications & Engagement Team has transformed the Directorate's employee experience, transitioning from siloed and fragmented to engaged and community driven. Feedback-driven initiatives introduced by the team, such as a new intranet, Townhalls, listening sessions and collaboration events, have boosted engagement rates from 59% to 80% in the recent Colleague Engagement Survey.

Through outstanding internal communications, the team has fostered cross-disciplinary collaborations, knowledge sharing and sparked innovation - key strategic priorities for Estates. By achieving a demonstrably more connected Directorate, they have increased engagement, job satisfaction, and higher retention rates, continually redefining their scope and broadening their impact with an eye to the future.

This small, self-starter team has set high standards for expectations of what good internal communication practices look like across the University, leading by example and sharing best practices to enhance result beyond their local area.

### ***Gambling Commission Internal Communications Team***

The Gambling Commission is an executive non-departmental public body based sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). We regulate most types of gambling in Great Britain and have regulated The National Lottery since 2013. We're a people-focused regulator; focused on making gambling fairer, safer and crime free. The internal communications team have been on a journey in the past 12 months, moving from one that has been seen to be reactive with no understanding of our role, to become a strategic partner to the organisation and is demonstrating the value it adds. We've improved all areas of the internal communications offering and are now a well-respected team within our organisation.

### ***WithYou Internal Communications Team***

WithYou has been on a journey of significant change over the last few years to improve outcomes for clients and financial stability. This meant they needed to transform their internal communications to support staff through this journey and respond to organisational needs.

In 2022, the Internal Communications team also experienced a number of leadership changes but in order to support the organisation, they needed to become even more resilient, collaborative, forward thinking and reactive all at once. The breadth and depth of the team's work had risen as they were supporting the strategic communications of projects and collaborating with more teams.



The team delivered an impressive amount of strategic and operational work in a year and set themselves up for the future. They measured success through their direct contribution to WithYou's goals, winning a team staff award, and receiving recognition from Investors in People following organisational-wide research.



## Best Public Sector or Not for Profit Team 6-10 people

### ***Cancer Research UK Internal Comms Team***

We're a high-performing team with a range of career backgrounds, using our internal communications expertise to keep 4,000 people at one of the UK's largest and most complex charities, Cancer Research UK, informed, motivated and inspired to beat cancer every day.

2023 was full of new challenges – but through the lens of our inspire, inform, culture and leadership internal communications strategic objectives, we've launched a new brand, transformed our intranet, refreshed our organisation values and increased leadership visibility.

We've boldly challenged upwards so our communications have maximum impact, we've spotlighted human stories to help our people feel like they belong, and we've taken a data-driven approach to show our credibility. By working together, we've delivered improvements not only in internal comms performance but in organisational measures on engagement and inclusion – getting us closer to a world where people live longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.

### ***University of East London Internal Communications Team***

The internal communications team at the University of East London (UEL) swiftly evolved amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, growing from one member to six, and spearheading transformative projects like the staff and student intranet. Despite significant team turnover and milestones such as UEL's 125th anniversary and launch of the Engage Staff Survey, the team adeptly managed staffing challenges while executing vital initiatives. Their efforts led to impressive engagement rates for events, surveys and internal platforms, achieved through diverse communication channels and innovative strategies. Beyond metrics, their work fostered a cohesive university community, aligning with UEL's vision of innovation and social equality. Through dedication and effective execution, the internal communications team enhanced the university's reputation, driving engagement and advancing strategic goals, positioning themselves as integral contributors to UEL's continued success and growth.



## Best Public Sector or Not for Profit Team 10+ people

### ***AQA Internal Comms Team***

AQA went into 2023 recognising that there were significant business challenges on the horizon - a fluid strategy, major reorganisation, office refurbishments, new subsidiaries and a fast-changing political environment meant we knew that we would have to work hard to communicate a complex set of activity in a way that would inspire colleagues rather than cause concern, confusion or anxiety. Building bridges between the Executive Team and colleagues and navigating the challenges presented by our relationships with our two trades unions has been a constant challenge. Providing clarity and reassurance whilst keeping colleagues motivated during arguably the most turbulent times in AQA history has been a rewarding but challenging journey.