

## **IOIC Awards 2026: Team.**

### **Best Small Agency (1-10 people)**

#### **HarknessKennett Ltd**

HarknessKennett is a boutique internal communications consultancy and recruitment agency delivering disproportionate impact for complex organisations through deep expertise, bespoke solutions and trusted partnerships. Now in its 24th year, the agency combines strategic IC counsel, evidence led research, tailored capability building and specialist recruitment to support transformation, performance and engagement at scale.

In 2025, amid economic uncertainty and significant internal transition, the five person core team recalibrated its strategy while delivering high impact work for global and UK clients including World Vision International, Pinsent Masons, WM Trains, Hyve Group and Flutter. From shaping a global IC operating model for 32,000 colleagues, to training uplift with measurable ROI, performance driven engagement campaigns and rapid, low risk recruitment for change programmes, outcomes were tangible and sustained.

With over 90% repeat and referred business, a long standing associate network and a strong commitment to developing the IC profession, HarknessKennett exemplifies how a small agency can deliver lasting value, credibility and impact.

#### **Visual Assets**

Visual Assets is a close-knit team of internal comms champions, trusted by big brands including Sodexo, Roquette, and IWG. What sets them apart is a people-first approach, treating internal stakeholders and employees as the first and most important customers of your brand. They believe that wowing internal teams and prospective employees is every bit as important as wooing customers.

2025 was a landmark year, deepening relationships with internal comms and HR teams around the world. This emphasis on long-lasting, ever-improving partnerships means clients can work with the same small group of internal comms experts at every stage of the journey. Whether they're defining a company culture, telling a compelling story for new hires, or executing smart campaigns to engage and excite employees, clients count on Visual Assets for a unique blend of insightful strategy and creative delivery.

In a world where purpose drives loyalty, Visual Assets helps organisations engage all their audiences with comms that connect, energise, and bring everyone along for the ride.

## Best Medium Agency (11-30 people)

### Cascade Productions

We are Cascade, a boutique engagement agency specialising in events, content and film to create impactful experiences.

Over 30 years, we've committed to creating outstanding experiences for everyone. Our 15-strong team delivers work across the UK and internationally, with clients including Iceland Foods, the National Trust, Bestway Group and more.

In the past 12 months, we've seen record-breaking growth in sales whilst delivering over 100 events and hours of high-quality video content.

Key projects include major live and hybrid events such as Bestway's 50th anniversary at the Royal Albert Hall and conferences for Iceland Foods and the National Trust. These combined creative storytelling with technical expertise to create engaging, impactful and lasting experiences.

Our people have made this an incredible year. With a newly installed CEO, ongoing investment into our people and technical capabilities and continued growth through new existing and new clients, we are well positioned for future success.

### Goldbug

Goldbug is a creative communications agency redefining what great internal comms looks like. In 2025, they stepped up as true strategic partners, combining brand thinking, behavioural insight and standout creativity to help global organisations navigate transformation and build stronger cultures from the inside out.

From bringing 4,000+ colleagues at Intact Insurance on the journey through a major rebrand, to reinvigorating National Grid's Living our values programme across a 30,000-strong workforce, Goldbug delivered campaigns that didn't just communicate change, they made it real, human and shared. With a brand-first philosophy, a unique Four E model (Empathy, Engagement, Education, Entertainment), and a relentless focus on employee experience, Goldbug creates work that people actually want to engage with.

The results speak for themselves: 15% revenue growth, 14 industry awards including the lolC Grand Prix, and measurable cultural impact across every client.

Goldbug isn't just delivering communications, they're setting the gold standard for engagement.

### The Surgery

We are The Surgery, an internal comms and creative agency on a mission to create work that works - strategic, insight led, creatively crafted solutions that move people and organisations forward. Our 20-expert-strong team brings strategic clarity, creativity, and practical execution together to solve our

clients' challenges. It's been a busy 12 months - we refined our story, strengthened our capabilities, and invested in people to help deliver our organic growth objectives. Our approach elevated our work with Breedon GB. We simplified their strategy, activated their leaders as true communicators, and built a sustainable comms ecosystem. The results speak for themselves: lifts in leadership clarity and confidence, strengthened collaboration and a long-term comms framework to drive business impact. We care deeply about what we create, about each other, and about the work we do. That's why clients trust us and enjoy working with us, and why our work always delivers measurable results.

## Best Large Agency (30+ people)

### Gallagher Communication

Gallagher Communication is a UK internal communications consultancy that treats communication as a catalyst for organisational change, not a support function. Our entry shows how we combine creative excellence, behavioural insight and rigorous change discipline to help clients turn strategy into everyday action. Operating within Gallagher's Global Talent Practice, our 80 strong team brings boutique agency creativity together with consulting depth and Prosci trained change capability.

Over the past year, we supported complex transformations across financial services, retail, pharma and the public sector. Our work moved beyond message delivery to design belief, clarity and behaviour change – from Nationwide's People Narrative and narrative led careers site to global transformation programmes at a multinational grocer and the European Space Agency.

Measured impact underpins everything we do. Our projects deliver improved understanding, engagement, adoption and productivity. We reinvest in skills and learning, helping clients maximise performance.

### H&H

H&H exists to Incite Brilliance and we prove it through the impact we create. We don't measure success by what we deliver, but by what changes because of it. The ownership our clients inspire. The belief that they build. The results they achieve.

In the past year, we've partnered with global, local and charity organisations - building deep, long-term relationships that extend far beyond any campaign. Our work has closed the gap between understanding and belief, turned strategy into action, and elevated internal communication into a driver of organisational success at the highest level.

Behind incite brilliance is a distinctive way of working. A flatter, pod-based model that unlocks the best thinking from our team and brings us into true partnership with our clients.

We reached over 5.5 million employees globally, consistently outperformed industry benchmarks for client experience, and continue to grow through trust, reputation and real results.

## Best In-House Team 1-5 people

### **Tarmac Internal Communication and Engagement Team**

The Tarmac Internal Communication and Engagement team is small, curious and unafraid to tackle the hard stuff. We listen first, design with our people and focus relentlessly on outcomes, not noise.

In the past year, we have played a central role in some of Tarmac's most critical priorities – improving safety culture, rebuilding trust in engagement, supporting large scale transformation and giving colleagues clearer access to information. From re energising safety engagement through colleague designed Stand Ups, to transforming Your Voice from a low trust survey into a genuine catalyst for change, our work has delivered measurable impact.

We helped unlock significant Optimise benefits. Engagement survey response rates rose from 35 per cent to 89 per cent. Safety engagement became human, practical and owned by our frontline. New channels amplified colleague voices, doubling engagement and embedding everyday recognition.

We are trusted advisers, practical partners and passionate advocates for colleague voice – turning insight into action and strategy into lived experience.

## Best In-House Team 6-10 people

### **Arup Global Internal Communications Team**

In 2025, Arup's in house Global Internal Communications (GIC) team navigated the firm through one of its most significant periods of organisational change. New governance, a new Executive Board and a new strategy, The Future We Choose, unfolded against a volatile external backdrop.

GIC was involved from the start, helping shape the strategy narrative, bringing member insight into decision-making, and shifting communication from top-down broadcast to two way dialogue through Viva Engage and a structured leadership communications programme.

Survey insights showed high strategy awareness directly following launch (79%) but low clarity on individual role impact (41%). GIC responded with disciplined choices: cutting non-strategy messaging and focusing on member-led storytelling, empowering leader communication, and a prioritised communications rhythm that reduced noise. By October, role clarity had increased to 51%, demonstrating that GIC used insight, focus and influence to shift understanding beyond awareness and help Arup move forward together.

### **LR's Internal Communications Team**

In 2025, LR's six person in-house Internal Communications team played a pivotal role in strengthening culture, accelerating transformation and rebuilding confidence after a historic low in colleague engagement. Through powerful storytelling, strategic alignment, and creative channel innovation, the team delivered communication that made complex change clear, human and relevant.

A major highlight was the embedding of Navigate, LR's global leadership community, which transformed leadership communication and drove measurable improvements in strategic understanding and engagement. The team produced transformation packs, leadership toolkits, and global campaigns aligned to LR's four strategic priorities - High Performance Culture, Delivery Excellence, Clients' First Choice and Sustainable Growth - ensuring colleagues understood not just what was changing, but why it mattered.

By embracing new inclusive technologies, simplifying complexity, and putting colleagues at the heart of every message, the team helped LR become more connected, more aligned and more confident about its future.

### **The Internal Channels and Content team at Network Rail**

In a year of reorganisation and intense change, the Internal Channels and Content (ICC) team safeguarded critical channels for ~42,000 colleagues, raised the quality bar on governance and content, and proved - through data led experimentation - that format and placement choices materially lift reach, discussion and trust. We turned trials into BAU (Reels on MyConnect; All Company announcements on Engage; a clearer "Spotlight" treatment), and built and delivered the first annual national content plan. We also prepared for industry integration by shaping targeting, analytics access and crisis readiness, all while maintaining delivery and partner confidence.

# Best In-House Team 10+ people

## **Admiral Group**

In 2025, Admiral's Internal Communications team did more than respond to change – it reshaped how the organisation communicates. During one of the most complex and fast moving years in Admiral's history, the team deliberately moved from delivery to influence, becoming embedded in planning and decision making from the outset. Working alongside leaders, Internal Communications helped shape how change was framed, timed and experienced by colleagues, enabling the business to move forward with clarity and confidence.

The team also transformed how communications were designed and delivered. Priority topics were no longer treated as isolated messages but planned as joined up campaigns, creating clear colleague journeys that reduced noise, strengthened cut through and improved understanding. This was underpinned by a strong commitment to two way engagement, using structured listening, insight and colleague networks to reflect real experiences across the business. Together, these shifts positioned Internal Communications as a trusted strategic partner, helping Admiral navigate sustained change while bringing strategy, culture and values to life every day.

## **Imperial Brands' Global Communications Team**

Imperial Brands' Global Communications Team executed a year-long, global campaign in support of its 2030 Strategy. Using targeted, inclusive and interactive tactics, the team enabled its leaders and engaged all of its 20,000-plus colleagues, ultimately inspiring belief, ownership and commitment in the new strategy.

## **The LEGO Group - Colleague Engagement Team**

The LEGO Group experienced phenomenal growth between 2017 and 2025, expanding to 33,000 colleagues globally, an increase of 74%.

This large number of new colleagues joining the LEGO Group created several challenges around wider engagement. So early in 2025, the need was identified to improve awareness and understanding of three key areas: our business strategy, the fantastic LEGO employee experience, and the connection with the LEGO® brand.

To address these challenges, the Colleague Engagement team came together, energised and ready to make a difference. The team developed a plan for the year, focussing on elevating understanding of business strategy (the 2025 Plan), raising awareness of what makes the LEGO Group a great place to work, and a renewed emphasis on playful storytelling to build pride in the LEGO brand.

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

## **Battersea's Internal Communications team**

Battersea's internal communications team played a pivotal role in supporting the first year of delivery of our new organisational strategy, placing people, trust and connection at its heart. Against a backdrop of rapid organisational growth and significant change, we focused on improving trust in leadership, strengthening two way communication, and deepening colleagues' connection to purpose. Through redesigned leadership events, inclusive Town Halls, authentic storytelling and a strong listening culture, we increased engagement, transparency and collaboration across teams. Early results show improved confidence in leadership, greater understanding of decision making and renewed motivation to deliver Battersea's ambitious mission.

## **Havering Council - Internal Communications Team**

Havering Council is setting the standard for strategic internal communications in local government and beyond.

The team shows the impact bold, creative and data-driven communications can have on local authorities operating under the dark cloud of a financial crisis that's pushing many to the brink of bankruptcy.

Hard-wired to the organisation's priorities, and focusing on outcomes, innovative staff engagement is providing solutions to the Council's budget challenges and saving millions.

From hybrid workers to off network staff, the team is improving the council for everyone with audience focused channels, so no one is left behind. Creative campaigns are benefiting Havering's residents as well as staff, and from the inside out the team is improving customer service across the council.

Havering's inventive work shows that success doesn't depend on the size of your budget and it is proudly sharing its approach to inspire others in the public sector.

## **Met Office Internal Communications and Engagement Team**

The Met Office's four-person Internal Communications and Engagement team has excelled in a uniquely busy year, delivering major initiatives including the launch of a new five-year corporate strategy, introduction of a Simplification Programme, encouraging innovation, and delivering a revamped intranet system. Clarity, trust, and pace mattered more than ever before as the team enabled more than 2,000 colleagues to stay informed, connected and engaged with developments across the year.

Despite its small size, the team worked at scale, supporting leaders to communicate with confidence and helping colleagues understand not just what was changing, but why it mattered and how they could engage. In that time, the team has also cultivated a safe space where they are truly better together, support and challenge each other and continually learn.

Their expertise ensures the Met Office remains resilient and responsive, with trusted executives visible, and employees feeling valued, informed, and engaged.

### **National Armaments Director (NAD) Group Communications and Engagement Team**

Despite the complexity of integrating multiple distinct organisations into a single, cohesive Group, the NAD Communications and Engagement team successfully delivered a strategic, inclusive, and innovative communications campaign. And they have done it with zero budget, under intense scrutiny both internally and externally, and while flexing to the demands of an organisation reacting to two major conflicts. By harnessing diverse skills and fostering collaboration across nine constituent organisations, the team built clarity, confidence, and a shared sense of purpose across the NAD Group's 27,000-strong workforce and external stakeholders.

Their work has been instrumental in enabling the NAD Group to transition smoothly into full operation by April 2026, supporting Defence's mission to equip the UK's armed forces with battle-winning capabilities efficiently and effectively.

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

## **ACCA's Internal Comms team**

In 2025, ACCA's internal communications team played a key role in helping people navigate change, strengthen their connection to our purpose and feel part of a confident, informed workforce. Guided by an audience-first, trust-led approach, we combined strategic partnering with high-quality delivery to ensure communications were relevant, clear and aligned to organisational priorities.

Our impact is reflected in engagement scores that are consistently above the global benchmark, high participation across channels and events, and growing confidence in leadership and change. Notably, our work on digital transformation – adapting tone, increasing transparency and localising messages – improved understanding and readiness for change.

We also fostered more open, two-way dialogue through initiatives such as Ask Me Anything sessions, Spark workshops, people storytelling, and manager workshops, strengthening trust and inclusion.

We are a small, highly effective team that delivers impact through strong stakeholder relationships, clear prioritisation and a relentless focus on continuous improvement. This ensures IC remains a critical enabler of change and performance at ACCA.

## **Internal Communications Team, NHS Property Services Ltd**

Since 2024, NHS Property Services has been evolving the way it communicates with its dispersed, mostly frontline workforce. The Internal Communications team, almost entirely new, rebuilt the foundations of communication by simplifying channels, strengthening leadership visibility, supporting managers and introducing a clearer, more predictable way of planning and delivering content.

We embedded a strategic business partnering approach, working closely with our Operations, People, Digital and Safety teams to identify communications priorities, so messages became clearer and more aligned to organisational priorities. This improved confidence, reduced reactive requests and helped colleagues understand what was changing and why.

We met colleagues where they work through national roadshows and on-site TechBars, offering space for questions and practical digital support. We also began a rolling series of colleague photography shoots to build our photo bank and show more real colleagues in our content.

Engagement increased across all core channels, helping us put in place strong, lasting foundations for a communicating culture and supporting a clearer, more consistent way to keep colleagues informed.