

IOIC Awards 2026: Innovation.

Game Changer

myNews: Making Internal News Personal by Bauer Media Group & Silicon Reef

Bauer Media set out to solve a challenge many organisations recognise: information overload. Employees were receiving updates across email, Teams and the intranet, but it wasn't always easy to spot what mattered most to them.

To meet this need, Bauer Media and Silicon Reef delivered a game changing solution: myNews. Built in SharePoint and Microsoft 365, myNews combines profile based targeting with the sites and topics employees choose to follow. Every employee gets a balanced view of what they need to know and what they want to know, in a single personalised news experience.

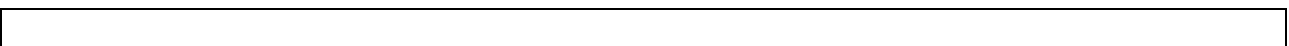
Colleagues now have one place to go for news that feels timely and meaningful to their role, while internal communications teams have a more targeted, consistent and efficient way to reach the right people, helping to strengthen "One Bauer" across the organisation.

The Trials of Mrs Tranter by GreenSquareAccord

Facing rising customer complaints and growing scrutiny, GreenSquareAccord (GSA) created an innovative, immersive engagement exercise - The Trials of Mrs Tranter - to drive behavioural change and improve service delivery. Inspired by murder mystery detective games, the self serve activity places participants step in the role of investigators, analysing an interactive evidence pack based on a realistic customer complaint.

Piloted at GSA's Leaders Conference, the exercise was refined and rolled out organisation wide, with more than 650 colleagues completing it between March and December 2025. Its inclusive, scalable design has delivered immediate impact: encouraging ownership and strengthening connection to GSA's mission and customer outcomes.

The results are significant: since its launch complaints have fallen by 43%, response times have improved, and employee engagement has risen, with colleagues reporting a clearer understanding of their role in delivering great service. Praised by the Housing Ombudsman and adopted by other providers, this low cost, high impact innovation is transforming how social housing organisations engage staff to improve customer experience.



Intact Insurance - Brand Launch by Goldbug & Intact Insurance

The insurance sector is traditionally characterised by formal, top-down and risk-averse communication. During the UK launch of Intact Insurance, a Canadian brand entering a new market following multiple acquisitions, this approach wouldn't have built trust, connection or belief among employees navigating significant change.

To challenge this norm, Intact Insurance introduced Tea with Leaders: a deliberately informal, bottom-up internal communications series that placed employees and leaders on equal footing. Filmed as relaxed conversations over a cup of tea and biscuits, the series humanised senior leaders, surfaced honest employee questions and created space for open dialogue at a critical moment of transition.

This marked a fundamental shift in how Intact Insurance communicated internally, moving from broadcast to conversation, from corporate messaging to shared storytelling. The series became the organisation's highest-engaged internal content ever, reshaping expectations of what internal communications could be and establishing a more open, human and participatory communication culture across the business.

“Unlock the Strategy” - Heathrow’s Escape Room Challenge by Heathrow Internal Communications

Heathrow transformed how it communicates strategy by replacing traditional, passive channels and mandatory events with an immersive, gamified experience. “Unlock the Strategy” introduced a first-of-its-kind escape room, designed to move colleagues from simply hearing the strategy to actively applying it.

Each puzzle aligned to a different part of the strategy, culminating in a final challenge that brought everything together. CEO-recorded content was embedded throughout, with the CEO and Executive team among the first to participate, setting a new precedent for leadership-led communication. The voluntary initiative secured 66% attendance, outperforming internal and industry benchmarks. 73% reported high confidence in understanding the strategy, and 98% rated the experience positively.

By shifting from telling to doing, Heathrow introduced a new, repeatable way to communicate complex topics. Crucially, the escape room also inspired further innovation within colleagues, bringing this new energy into their roles moving forwards.

The Communicating Organisation by Steam Thermal Solutions (part of Spirax Group) & AB

Steam Thermal Solutions designs, supplies and services industrial and commercial steam systems. It is a complex multinational organisation undergoing a significant transformation. A game-changing approach to internal communication was needed to support the shift.

The solution was the Communicating Organisation.

A programme that reorientates communication from a broadcast or support function to a strategic driver of business performance. This is internal communication 2.0, which recognises a fundamental

truth about the organisation: that success depends on the knowledge, expertise and collaboration of its people.

Through a network of influencers, known as Connectors, armed with multi-channel tools, the initiative has showed signs of real impact: engagement scores in the pilot area are among the highest in the organisation; survey data and case studies demonstrate improved cross-border collaboration; leaders in the pilot area receive higher favourability ratings; and safety-related engagement scores are strong. As one leader started, "I haven't seen anything more powerful in my career."

Innovative Use of Media/Technology

Bellway's innovative Pathway to the effective use of AI by Bellway

Bellway's forward-thinking internal communications team has successfully embraced a wide range of new technologies to deliver an enriched communications experience through its employee engagement app Pathway.

A variety of AI tools have enabled the two-person team to create a greater depth and volume of engaging content than would otherwise have been possible with their limited resources. This includes an AI-generated podcast – the first to be trialled in the UK using this software – which automatically turns existing intranet content into personalised podcast episodes, meaning staff can easily access important updates and information on the move.

The team is also leading the way in the use of AI tools to create images, videos and headlines and has started work to incorporate a live broadcast function into Pathway. These innovations are helping to drive greater engagement with Pathway, with the average number of daily users on the platform increasing from 1,100 to 1,300.

Côte Connect – Empowering Teams Through Technology by Côte Brasserie x Cocentric

In 2025, Côte set out to transform how our people across 69 brasseries and our Support Office connect, communicate and share what makes our hospitality unique. With the closure of Workplace, we recognised an opportunity to do more than replace a tool. We wanted to reimagine the role technology could play in strengthening our culture and helping our people feel informed, supported and proud of their work.

Working with Cocentric, we built a mobile friendly intranet and a Viva Engage experience using the Microsoft 365 tools already available to us. The intranet provides simple access to the information teams rely on every day, and the new templated pages give functions the confidence to publish clear and engaging content. Viva Engage has created a space for stories, recognition and connection across the business.

Together, these platforms have improved communication quality, deepened engagement and helped people feel more connected to Côte's vision.

Most Innovative Content Creation

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Values, reimagined: Co-creating culture through immersive, AI-powered storytelling by Nest and Home

Nest needed a new set of values that could reflect its strong sense of purpose while building greater visibility of performance and future ambition. Rather than taking a traditional, top down approach, Nest partnered with Home to co create its culture through an immersive, AI powered experience that actively involved the entire organisation.

At the heart of the work was Values Town—an interactive, physical environment that transformed listening into participation. Through live experiences such as the Values Auction, colleagues debated, prioritised and shaped the behaviours that should define Nest's future, while AI captured and synthesised insight in real time. This enabled the organisation to define three clear cultural drivers that balanced purpose and performance.

Innovation continued beyond launch, with personalised AI tools like the Values Compass helping colleagues understand what the values mean for them personally, and practical leadership tools embedding them into everyday work. The result is exceptional engagement, strong alignment and a set of values genuinely owned by the people who helped create them.

Can you trust yourself? by Subsea7 Group Communications and Group IT

Subsea7 communications activity - Can you trust yourself?

How can we come up with an internal engagement activity focused on a material business priority that will educate our people in a memorable way?

We can turn a technical risk into an emotive, sensory challenge.

We can wield the power to engage and unnerve our people at the same time.

We can combine gamification, authority, and the serious threats we all encounter every day to make this activity informative and unsettling.

With creativity, strategic intent, and the courage to make our audience question their own judgment, we can show how the combination of a very small budget and a good idea can work.