



How MBNA increased employee engagement from 52% to 88%



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For further information visit
www.10eighty.co.uk



The first ever strengths-based award ceremony occurred at the end of the event to recognise and celebrate better practices in the area of strengths-based people management. Paul Corke, Leadership Development Manager at MBNA, a Bank of America company, won the 'Best strengths-based leadership development initiative' award.

The five award categories

- Best strengths-based organisation development initiative
- Best strengths-based leadership development initiative
- Best strengths-based team development initiative
- Best strengths-based selection initiative
- Outstanding contribution to positive psychology

How the judges picked a winner

As a general overview, when looking for the winners of our awards The Strengths Partnership were interested in a demonstration of how the strengths-approach (and Strengthscope®) was used to overcome a particular challenge. They considered award submissions and also case study submissions.

"What we liked in particular about the MBNA case study was that it was a brilliant demonstration of how strengths can be used to turn a negative situation, where the company was facing mass redundancy, into such a positive atmosphere, including the innovative collaboration of tools - a strengths profiler and

a technology-based solution - our [Leadership Cloud](#). The creativity of the programme (the 3 explorers) was extremely original".

About the organisation

MBNA is one of the UK's largest credit card lenders and part of Bank of America. Based in Chester with approximately 2000 employees, it is one of the region's biggest private employers. The business was and is very profitable but its future had been thrown into considerable doubt in 2011 when the business had been formally told by its parent company that it would be exiting the credit card business in Europe.

The challenge

There was significant uncertainty for MBNA staff and a restructuring exercise resulted in people leaving the business. Morale was low, not least because few had clarity on whether or not their jobs would be secure, but MBNA decided the best route to a positive outcome was through a positive and engaged workforce.

What MBNA and 10Eighty did

10Eighty worked in partnership with MBNA to deliver a leadership development programme what we call mass customisation of learning (tailored to the needs of each member of a large group) using a breakthrough collaborative platform called the Leadership Cloud. This used tools specifically designed to help users to learn from each other and work in collaboration with one another. MBNA and 10Eighty monitored collaborative discussions and also ran polls to get a feedback loop of the evolving needs obtainable from the development centre.

Collaborative learning

Underpinning this development was a unique technology to facilitate collaborative learning. The Leadership Cloud facilitated the learning experience. All elements of the programme (including self-awareness tools, masterclasses, mentoring and coaching, CSR, and reflective learning) were delivered in this way. Key to the successful introduction of collaborative learning via the Leadership Cloud was the participation of key influencers. 10Eighty worked with a small group of L&D, communication and IT specialists to encourage active participation.

This was greatly accelerated by the participation of the executive team, including Ian O'Doherty, the CEO. Both used the Cloud to communicate directly and engage with all 450 leaders within the organisation and a genuine two-way dialogue quickly developed. The Cloud was used for a variety of messages, from sharing success (MBNA won the Credit Card of the year in 2014 and the Personnel Today Engagement Award in 2013), to business updates. Because the programme was voluntary, the Leadership Cloud allowed participants to select those elements of the programme which were of interest. Because the Leadership Cloud has no set office hours, delivery of learning became 24/7 and was delivered via desktop, laptop or smartphones at a time which suited individuals and the business.

Impact

The Leadership Cloud reconnected and re-engaged leaders and teams within the business during a period of great uncertainty. There are currently 250 leaders active on the Cloud, with the number growing rapidly.

The technology has:-

- Transformed collective thinking skills, intelligence gathering and cooperation across the business.
- Established cross-functional team working as the rule, rather than the exception.
- Provided leadership with a powerful tool to transform engagement in times of change and uncertainty.
- Underpinned how it develops leaders and how they communicate and engage with one another.

The hard numbers

In 2010, the level of engagement for MBNA operating as part of the parent company was 53%. By the end of 2012, the equivalent figure for the newly empowered “company within a company” was 70%, a remarkable increase in itself, given a substantial redundancy programme and the uncertain timings of the exit strategy. In the first full year of the Leadership Cloud, the overall level of engagement in 2013 leapt further to 79% from 70%. ‘According to MBNA’s 2014 engagement survey their levels of engagement increased to 82% and their latest engagement score for 2015 has increased to 88%’.

Crucially MBNA, in buying in to the mindset of collaborative learning, also identified additional business uses where collaborative learning could add real business benefits in brand and product development. And MBNA became the Personnel Today Winners for Employee Engagement in 2013 and have been shortlisted in the 2014 awards for HR Excellence in technology. Finally, those feeling that MBNA was a better place to work that it was 12 months ago – the first time the question had been asked - ranked at 64%, a staggering 31% above the industry benchmark.



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