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## Policy: Communication Strategy

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This policy defines WINNS Services Communication Strategy to ensure it meets requirements.
- 1.2. The General Manager is responsible for implementation and management Communication Strategy policy

Rev.	Date	Nature of Changes	Approved By
1	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2018	Original issue.	C Stebbing

### 2. POLICY: A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR WINNS SERVICES.

Effective communication is one of the keystones of quality performance. It serves a number of goals:

- a. It demonstrates openness and transparency, so avoiding the spread of rumours and misinformation amongst the workforce.
- b. It helps to build ownership of and commitment towards the task in hand and ensures the organisation as a whole is clear of its vision, values and objectives. It thereby helps to promote a corporate identity.
- c. It facilitates the spreading of best practice and encourages the proposal of ideas for improvement, thereby nourishing a culture of continuous improvement.
- d. It promotes a partnership relationship with customers and suppliers.
- e. It projects a positive image of Winns as a professional, efficient and innovative organisation, conscious of its responsibilities within the local society and as a good and caring employer.

The success of this communications strategy is dependent on its being implemented fully throughout a clearly recognised Line Management Structure<sup>1</sup>.

The proponents of this strategy document is for Directors. Proposed changes are to be forwarded to them and the whole document is to be reviewed annually by WINNS Management Board.

### 3. AIM

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The aim of this instruction is to lay out the strategy and the policy for communication both within Winns and externally.

#### 4. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Winns communications strategy encompasses a wide range of activities as follows:

- a. Top down internal communication.
- b. Bottom up internal communication.
- c. Lateral communication within Winns.
- d. External communication with Winns customers and suppliers.
- e. Public Relations Policy, including links with the Press.

The strategy does not deal with routine staff communications with eg Sites nor with routine internal performance reporting and information flows.

Top-Down Communication. A central network of the Communications Strategy is that all employees are made aware in a timely manner of all matters of relevance to them. The “information of relevance” will include general information on the mission, values and policies of WINNS as a whole and of Winns departments in particular, as well as information of specific relevance to particular employees or groups of employees. The 5 vehicles for top-down communications are as follows:

The Line Management Structure<sup>1</sup>. Detail of Winns policy is at Paragraphs 10-12 below.

Winns Newsletter. Detail is at Paragraphs 13-15 below.

Routine and Orders and Notices. Detail is at Paragraph 16 below.

Centralised Briefings. There may be occasions when it is decided that the best method of informing the workforce of significant policy changes is by means of centralised briefings. These will be done either by the Director or by another member of his senior management team and will be directed either at the entire workforce or at those sectors of the workforce which will be particularly affected by the briefing content.

Site Document Packs. The choice of which communication channel to use will depend on a consideration of a number of factors: the number and grade of the target audience; the time criticality and the sensitivity of the information to be communicated; and whether it is being promulgated for action or only for information.

Bottom-Up Communication. Of equal importance as top-down communications is the system for bottom-up communication. This is designed to gain the views and ideas for improvement from individual employees. It is important that all employees are able to (and are encouraged to) submit such views. The mechanisms for achieving this bottom-up communication are as follows:

- a. The Line Management Structure<sup>1</sup>. Detail of WINNS policy is at Paragraphs 10-12. Of particular relevance are the structure of Team Meetings and the Open-Door Policy.
- b. Employee Surveys. Work is in hand to establish a mechanism and format for such surveys. The aim will be to assess, by means of an anonymous questionnaire, employee morale and satisfaction with regard to a wide range of relevant issues (eg passage of information, provision of training, working conditions, health and safety, remuneration, recreational facilities etc). It will also provide a mechanism for identifying problem areas and for eliciting ideas for improvement. *(This Communication Strategy and Policy document will be updated when details have been finalised.)*
- c. HASW Committees. HASW Committee (which also covers WINNS Sites) provide forums at which employees may, through their departmental HASW representative, raise matters of concern or propose ideas for improvement in relation to health and safety matters.

Lateral Communications. There are a plethora of lateral communication requirements within Winns. These will tend to be of a more ad hoc nature than those described above and are not amenable to any laid down policy or standardised structure. Some mechanisms will be set out in the relevant instructions or process instructions<sup>2</sup> (eg training support bidding, performance reporting etc). Others will simply require the common sense application of normal internal consultation and communication procedures. A particular requirement for lateral communications is generated following the attendance by a member of WINNS staff as WINNS representative at an external conference or meeting. In such a situation the attendee is required to circulate to interested parties a synopsis of the relevant points and discussions of the meeting; if full minutes are produced then circulation of these will suffice. WINNS Newsletter and/or Intranet should be used for the passage of general information of interest or relevance to a major sector of the workforce where a response is not required.

External Communications and Liaison with Customers and Suppliers. WINNS is dependent on a wide range of suppliers. It delivers outputs to a wide range of customers as listed in WINNS Plan WINNS approach to its dealings with both customers and suppliers is to be one of cooperation and partnership (as opposed to an at-arms-length quasi-contractual relationship). In order to promote such a relationship, there is a key requirement for liaison and discussion across this customer-supplier interface. The aims of such liaison are twofold:

- a. To promote a better understanding by both parties of the requirements, operational constraints and problems of the other party.
- b. To work together to alleviate and, where possible, to resolve any such difficulties in order to enhance efficiency and improve the quality of service.

Public Relations Policy. The purpose of WINNS Marketing is to promote the name and image of WINNS within the community, projecting Winns as a professional, efficient and innovative organisation, conscious of its responsibilities within the local society, and a good and caring employer. Marketing is a

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command function; all leaders must be aware of the potential benefits and disadvantages of good and bad Marketing. In simple terms, marketing can be either reactive or proactive. Reactive marketing essentially involves the handling and reporting of incidents and events which might arouse Press interest and can be largely defensive in its nature; the rules governing such activity are contained in this policy. It is, however, through proactive marketing that WINNS will succeed in promoting its image. Such marketing will be pursued by means of the following:

- a. WINNS Marketing Director is the Directors of Winns, through whom all marketing issues are to be channelled. All marketing initiatives, including proposed articles in the press, are to be discussed in advance with him.
- b. Regular articles will be sought by Director, The focus of such articles will be on the service aspects of WINNS, emphasising professional developments, successes and innovation.
- c. Publicity in the local media will be achieved as opportunities arise. The Line Management Structure must be quick to recognise such opportunities and discuss their potential with the Marketing Director, who will establish contact with editors.
- d. All those involved in liaison with customers and suppliers, as explained above, are to use every opportunity to “sell” WINNS in a positive manner.

## **5. THE LINE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT STYLE**

The top levels of WINNS Line Management Structure are laid out diagrammatically at Annex A to WINNS Plan. The Line Management Structure below this level is left to the discretion of Department Heads. Full exploitation of the Line Management Structure is an essential element in WINNS Communication Strategy. Specific aspects of the Line Management Structure doctrine as applied at Winns, which are of relevance to this communication policy document, are a structure of team briefings and a management style which encourages accessibility by subordinates.

Team Meetings. Line management are to establish a cascade system of team meetings within their area of responsibility in order to:

- a. Provide a conduit for the timely dissemination of information and policy from higher levels down to individual employees.
- b. Enable individuals to share information with members of their “team”.
- c. Enable team leaders to issue direction and to coordinate the activities of their “team” for the ensuing period.
- d. Provide the opportunity for discussion of current issues and problems.

The structure, frequency and conduct of these meetings is left to the discretion of line managers. However, they are to articulate on paper what their policy is and decision minutes are to be produced detailing decisions made and issues still to be resolved. All employees are to have the opportunity to attend such a meeting during working hours at least once every 12 weeks.

Management Style. All WINNS Directors and managers, at whatever level, are to make themselves accessible to their subordinates. In practice this means that they are to adopt an “open door” policy and are encouraged to “manage by walking about”:

- a. Open Door Management. WINNS are to operate an open-door policy. By this is meant that all employees have the right of access to management, at whatever level, to discuss issues of concern and to propose ideas for improvement. The initial contact will normally be made with the individual's actual line manager but there will be occasions when, for reasons of sensitivity or personal discord, the employee wishes to raise the issue at a higher level. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the employee at the level at which it is first raised, he is fully entitled to raise it at a higher level and no impediments to his doing so should be placed in his way<sup>3</sup>. Trade union representatives have freedom of access to the Directors on any issue of concern to their members.
- b. “Managing by Walking About”. WINNS leaders and managers must beware of getting tied to their desk and are encouraged to visit and discuss issues with employees in their area of responsibility in the employees' place of work. The onus is on the line manager to visit the subordinate and not vicer-versa Winns. As a guide, a line manager should aim to communicate with his immediate subordinates at least every other day (subject to availability) and with the level below that at least once every 2 weeks.