

Enhancing Internal Communication in a Multinational Research Environment

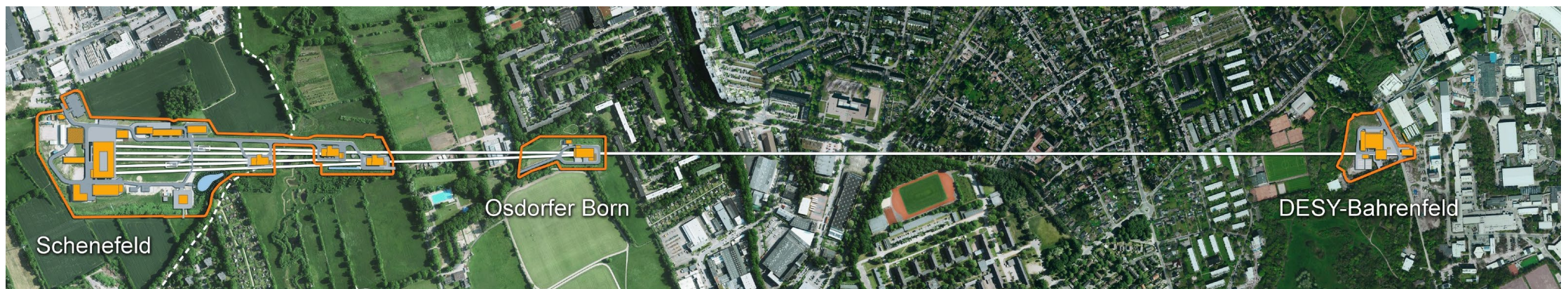
Bernd Ebeling
Marieke Sander

PAERI conference 2024



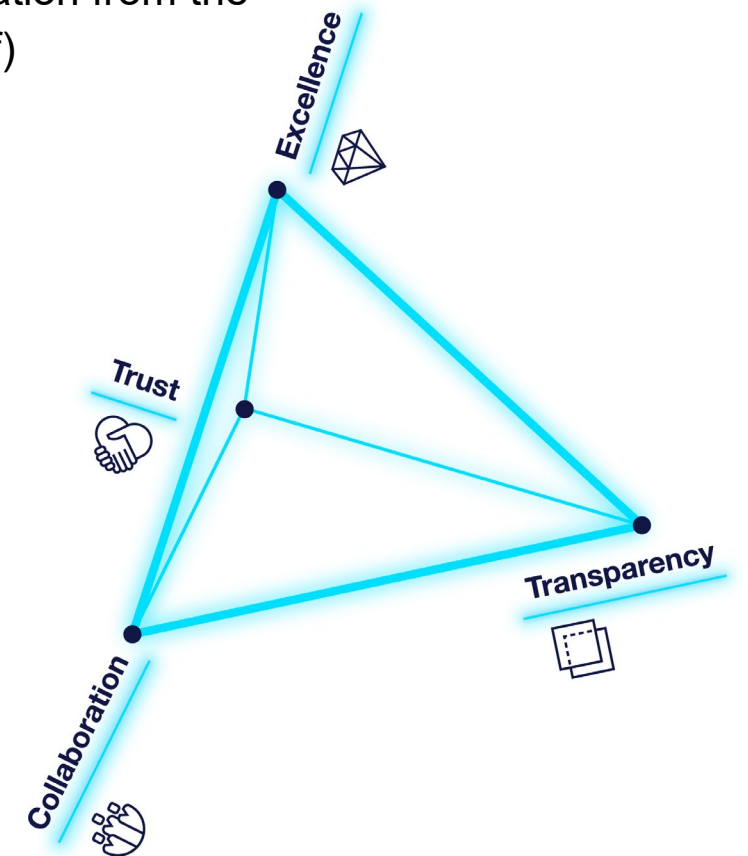
European XFEL – An international research facility

- Located in Schenefeld near Hamburg, Germany
- Funded by 12 partner countries
- 3.4 km long X-ray laser in underground tunnels
- Diverse workforce with staff from more than 60 countries with different cultural and educational backgrounds

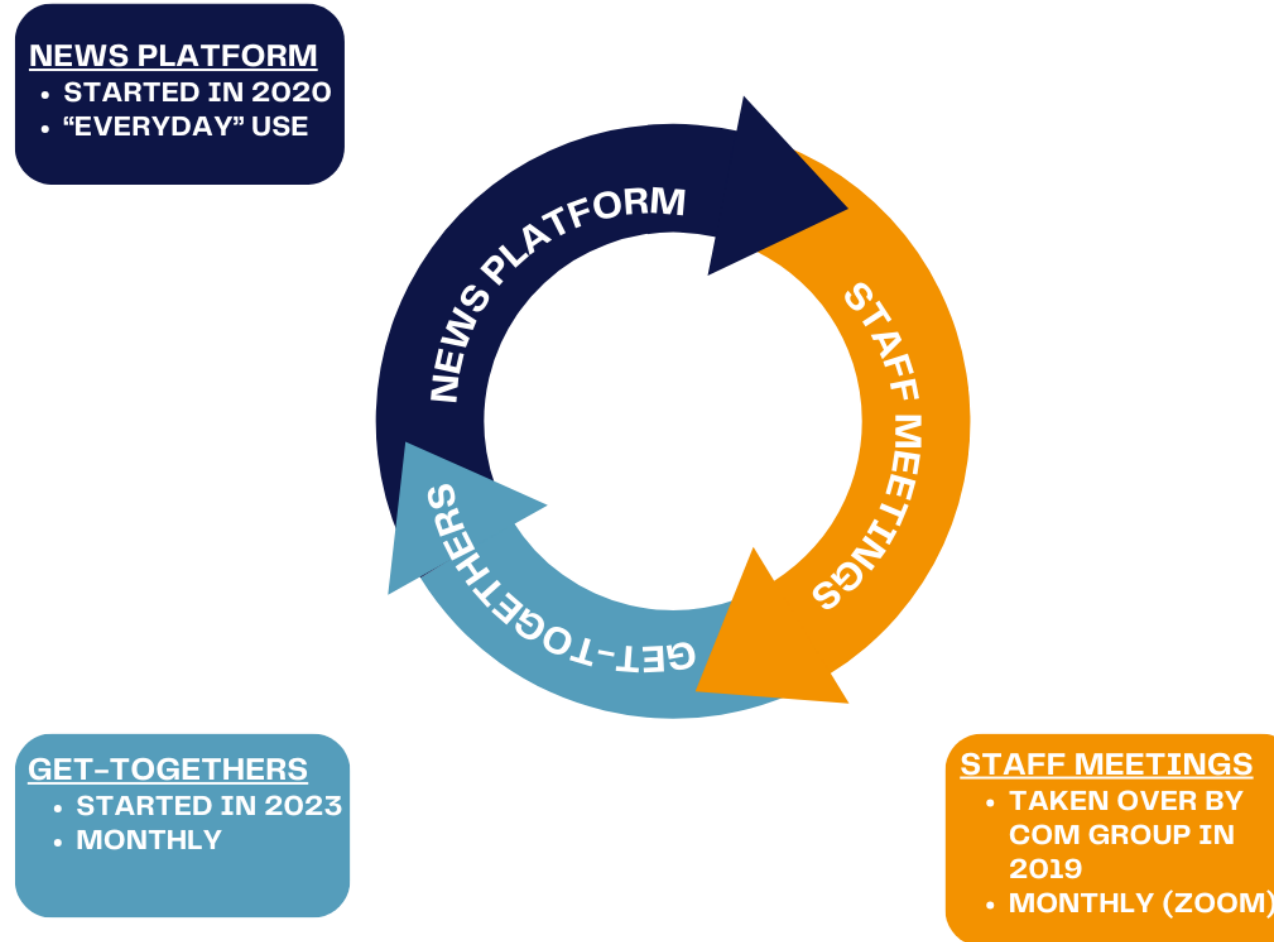


Strengthening Internal Communications through our values

- Challenge for Internal Communications: to improve transparency and communication from the top down and across the organization, driven by our values (selected by our staff)



Overview of channels managed by the Communication group

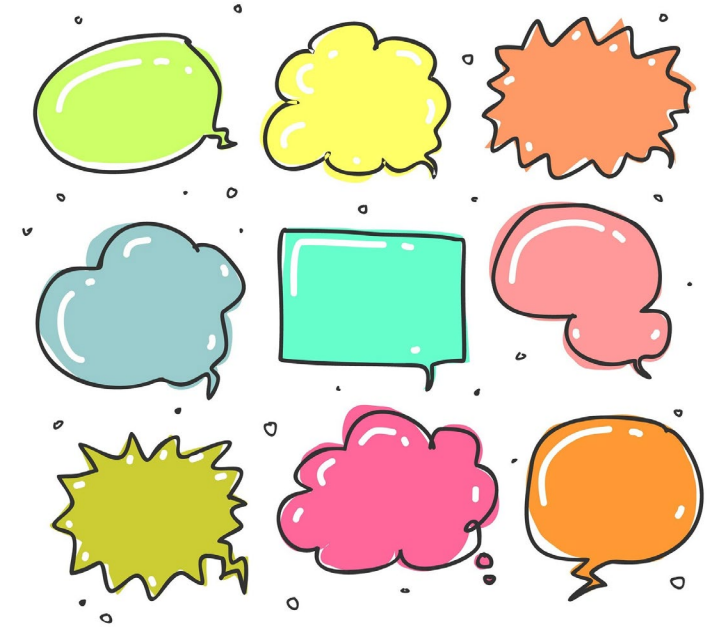


Internal news platform

Why we implemented the internal news platform

- Facilitating better, easier and more up-to-date communication and information
- Platform replaced a digital monthly News Bulletin
- Promoting dialogue across all groups and levels
- Increasing a "sense of belonging"
- Cleaning up the email inboxes from messages to all staff

We chose a Hamburg-based provider called Just Social after testing several other apps (Coyo, Beehive, IK-UP, Quiply and XELOS).

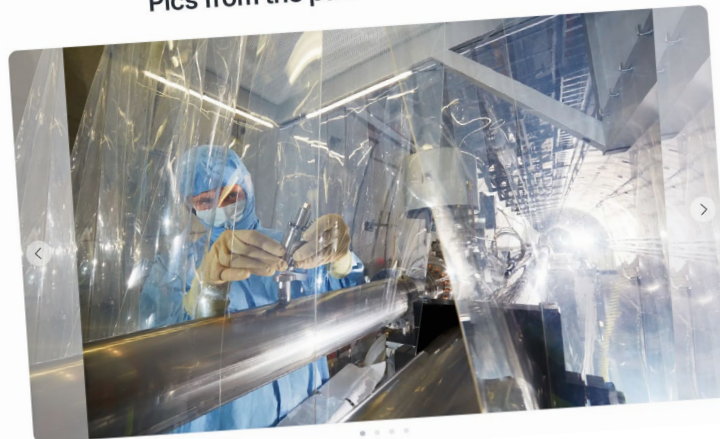


Examples from the newsfeed: COM group contributions

The Lighthouse is open



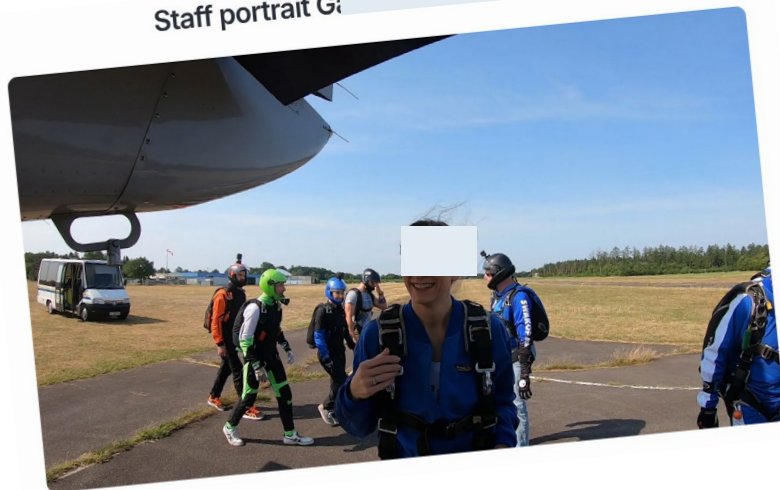
Pics from the past



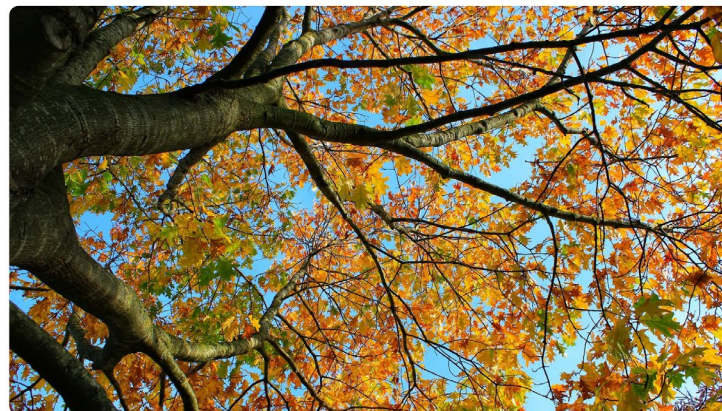
Three questions.... on last week's fire brigade exercise in our tunnels



Staff portrait G



Autumn Mystery (Coffee) Break



Just a short EU XFEL Campus poem



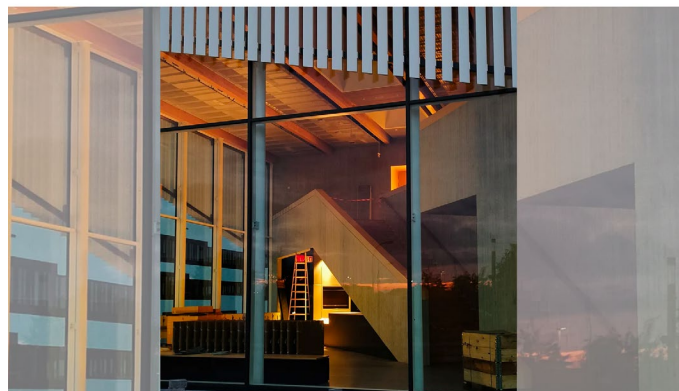
Examples from the newsfeed: HR, EOS, Works Council, Job opportunity channels



PhD position on terahertz spin dynamics in hybrid inorganic/organic materials (CISStronics) at HZDR

Examples from the newsfeed: individual staff contributions

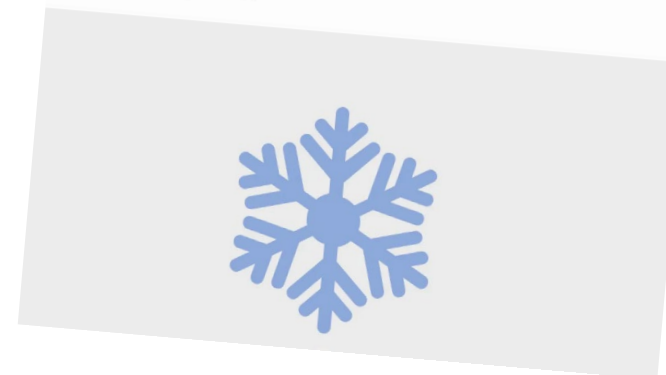
Campus life in Color



Campus Wildlife: A predator in the sand.



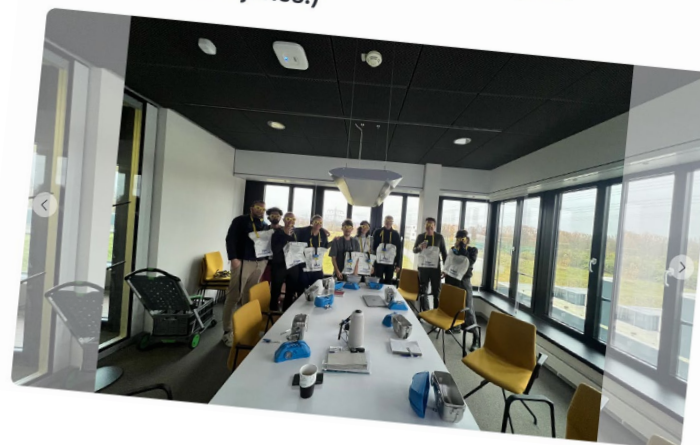
☆ Winter party international playlist ☆



Let the games continue...



Renewed self-rescue training with no injuries.)



Ph...ng defends his PhD



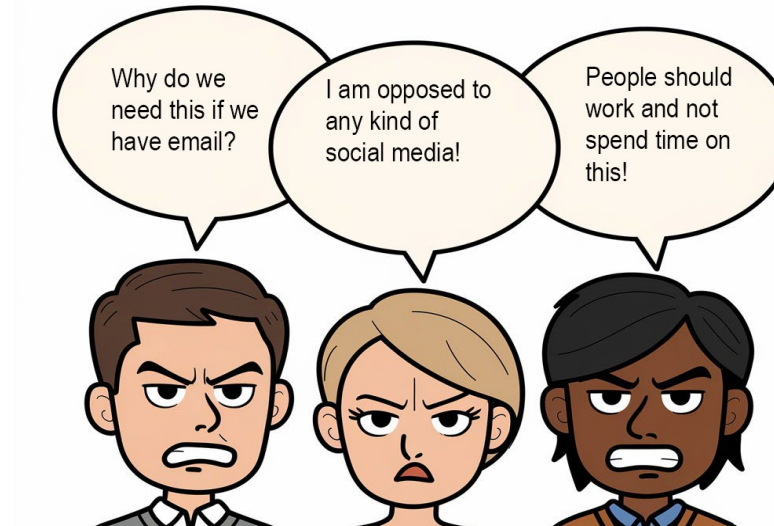
Facts and figures

- ca. 400 posts per year, equalling 1.6 posts per working day
- ca. 90% of staff uses Just Social
- Use is not mandatory
- Vital information has to be distributed via other channels



Some takeaways from our experience

- **It takes time!** Legal checks / GDPR issues, involvement by IT, the Works Council, Procurement, the Management Board,...
- Not everybody is convinced right from the start

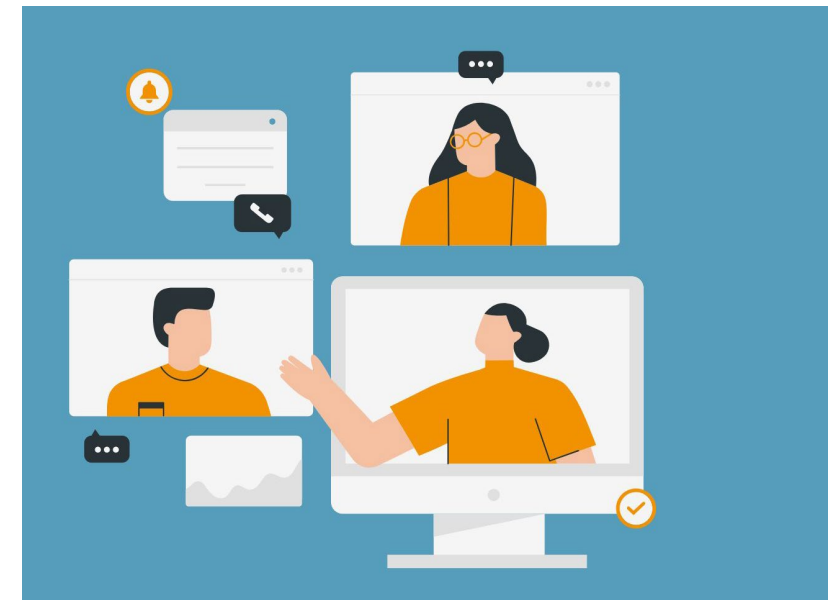


- Colleagues have to get used to the idea being handed a „driving seat“ in internal comms, and the platform did not immediately take off at full speed

Staff meetings

Overview monthly staff meetings at European XFEL

- Before Internal Comms: Director giving updates or a staff member presenting a „topic of interest“, 10 min – 1h
- Since 2019 organised by Internal Comms: Agenda with input and topic suggestions from different groups, moderated by COM
- Since the pandemic on Zoom
- Fixed agenda points:
 - Operations Report by one of the Scientific Directors
 - Update by the Managing Directors
 - News from the Works Council
 - Current topics from different staff or groups
 - Breakout sessions with all presenters



Evaluation of staff meetings

- Average attendance: ca. 350 people
- Zoom poll after every meeting: average rating 4.14 points out of 5
- Staff survey every two years. Most recently:
 - 80% find that the staff meetings cover relevant topics
 - 76% would like to keep them on a monthly basis (the rest would prefer a meeting every second or third month)
- Anonymous feedback postbox available on the intranet since recently

1. What did you think of this Staff Meeting overall?

It was great!

It was fine.

So-so.

It was not that good.

It was bad.



■ Company Get-Togethers

Company get-togethers at European XFEL

- Aim: facilitate personal interaction
- Open monthly regular slot from 9:30-10:30
- Coffee, tea, snacks are provided
- Attendance is voluntary, between 100 and 150 colleagues join
- Opportunity for development of new ideas, get in contact with colleagues you usually don't work with
- Also used for short announcements
- Occasion for leaving or retiring staff to say goodbye



Miscellaneous

Other internal comms topics

- Monitors for (internal) communication-related topics in the foyer and in our campus restaurant



- Support for our clubs and social groups on all internal comm channels, e.g.

- Book club
- Travel club
- Gardening club
- Knit and Stitch club
- Guitar club
- Various sports groups



The text "THANK YOU!" is rendered in a bold, bubbly, sans-serif font. The letters are dark blue with a white outline, and the entire graphic is surrounded by a thick, multi-layered border in shades of orange and light blue, giving it a 3D, sticker-like appearance.

We look forward to your questions!