

Inspiring Stories,

The Cumberland,

Setting a foundation for the next 170 years

Background,

The Cumberland is a Carlisle-headquartered building society with over 700 employees and branches across the northwest of England and southern Scotland. It's been around for almost 170 years and, in that time, its branches and those who work in them have become an important part of the communities in which they operate.

The challenge,

The Cumberland is now on a transformation journey that will touch everyone in the organisation in one way or another. A significant digital transformation, supporting processes and systems and how people work together is all going to change. While complex, this change will benefit not just the thousands of existing customers, it will also provide The Cumberland with the opportunity to compete across the UK. Unfortunately, there was a lack of consistent understanding about what those plans were.

“We needed to make sure that every one of our 700 colleagues understood where we're going, why, and how each of them will help us to get there.”

Des Moore, Chief Executive Officer

What we did,

We needed to ensure that everyone in The Cumberland - from those working in branches to those who support them - had a really clear understanding of the strategy, why it was happening and what needed to change.

We wanted to create a story for The Cumberland, but we knew that, to be impactful, it had to reflect them and their words.

So, we ran workshops with the senior leadership team (SLT) and with employees from across the organisation. We wanted to hear about what made them proud, what caused frustration, how they felt about this change, barriers to them living their purpose; and what the future might look and feel like.

And then we took all that insight along with their strategy and we created The Cumberland Story.



The output,

The Cumberland Story is a five-chapter, co-created narrative which combines words and illustration to explore:

- Their pride and history
- Why they need to change
- How they'll do it
- The critical role of their people; and
- What the future holds

Bringing the story to life for all employees,

The story was shared at two offsite events. The first was for 140 people leaders, who were immersed in the story to enable them to play a key role in onward communication and embedding with their teams. The other, held over two days, was for over 600 employees. They heard the story from the SLT and then had the opportunity to explore and discuss elements of the story through activities, discussions and stories.

What next?,

Embedding a story like this is key and people leaders have been provided with the tools and support to be able to bring it to life with their teams, an exercise that will surface stories that will be shared and discussed within the organisation.

**inspiring
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