



Vision and values

Better World – Our Commitment to Society

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Vision and values

Our vision is of a communications-rich world – a world in which everyone, irrespective of nationality, culture, class or education, can benefit from the power of communication skills and technology.

This vision is at the heart of our determination to be “the most successful worldwide communications group”. It is the foundation of BT’s Commitment to Society, and central to our social programmes.

As an important player in the global ICT sector we believe BT makes a significant contribution to society and the health of the planet by enabling better communications between individuals and businesses, by helping to cut costs and conserve energy, and by generally improving our efficiency and effectiveness in so many ways.

We really believe that better communications can mean a “better world”, to the extent that we’re launching a campaign on “digital inclusion” that will help to ensure that everyone has the chance to communicate more effectively in the new world of the Internet and e-business.

And our community programme further builds on the concept of contributing to a better world through better communications.

It is also central to our strategic approach to corporate social responsibility which is all about BT doing business in a thoughtful and caring way.

In fact wherever we operate, we aim to meet a set of minimum standards. These are defined in our Statement of Business Practice, which sets out a business principles framework for our non-financial activities.

Supporting and reinforcing the Statement of Business Practice, we have a number of more specific company-wide policies covering equal opportunities, environment and health and safety and the following set of specific values BT people are asked to respect:

- we put customers first
- we are professional
- we respect each other
- we work as one team
- we are committed to continuous improvement

“In a recent benchmarking study of FTSE100 companies, undertaken by Integrity Works, BT came equal first in ‘Ethical Expression’. The object was to establish the relationship between a company’s stated ethical precepts and best practice, and also their effectiveness in implementing these principles. The methodology used included a questionnaire and follow up discussions with senior company representatives. The process was based upon a formula developed for The Times newspaper by Integrity Works to ascertain, over a two-year period, ‘Ethical Expression’ ratings for all of the FTSE 100 companies.”

Business principles

BT is committed to doing business in a manner consistent with world-class standards of business integrity.

Our financial Report and Accounts provides full details of our Board level corporate governance procedures. In addition, our recently-updated Statement of Business Practice, entitled *The Way We Work*, defines the way in which we will conduct all our operations (both in the UK and internationally) and how we will meet increasing expectations in the areas of business ethics.

The statement also outlines how we will work with our international joint ventures to create added value for our customers and our shareholders, while continuing to adhere to high standards of business practice.

During 2000/2001 we have put a lot of effort into ensuring that everyone who works for BT is familiar with the Statement.

A printed copy has been sent to every employee and is also available on the BT intranet. The Statement is available in eight languages – English, German, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin).

There is also a Q & A Guide for managers to help them brief their teams.

Other elements of a comprehensive employee communications plan include:

- a video and a credit card-size CD-ROM (explaining the Statement) which went to all senior managers (for use as a briefing tool)
- a desk calendar illustrating our 12 business principles
- A comprehensive joint venture Statement Pack that went to all CEOs of BT's JVs
- letters from senior managers to their teams reinforcing the compliance message.

In collaboration with the Institute of Business Ethics, we also established an in-house business practice excellence award. Individuals are nominated by colleagues for demonstrating excellent business practice behaviour.

We published a booklet – *Maintaining Integrity* – a copy of which was sent to all managers.

And we set up a helpline for people seeking help and confidential advice. This is available via both phone and e-mail and is dealt with by the Head of Group Business Practice.

And because we believe that excellent business practice is and must be part of business as usual, we have found ways of embedding it in our day-to-day activities.

We have, for example, linked the Statement to Turnbull compliance (a recently introduced requirement of company financial reporting), not only at the BT Group level but also at the operational unit level.

This means that the risk of non-compliance is regularly reviewed throughout the business, rather than just at the corporate centre. All senior managers are required to manage and minimise that risk (rather than leaving it to a specialist in compliance) and have recently briefed their teams on the importance of the Statement.