

## The objective

BT Global Services wanted to make C-suite decision-makers more aware of its position as a networked IT provider and more interested in the specific business benefits of BT's capabilities. To achieve its aims, BTGS required an integrated through-the-line communications activity that would position its approach to customers, i.e. working on an intimate level with them as peers, and supporting them in merging the different assets in their organisation for the greater good of their business. The aim of the campaign was to ensure that the conversations between BTGS and their C-suite customer base were facilitated by the editorial content produced from the FT editorial team and the peer-to-peer discussions that followed.

## The big idea

There were three central themes to the BTGS communications strategy: collaboration, sustainability and risk resilience. All three areas have intrinsic value to the FT's global audience and are also areas where BTGS can help its customers. The FT partnership with BT focused on the collaboration theme. Working alongside BTGS, we challenged the conventional view that business is all about competition, and looked at how companies can exploit the power of collaborative partnerships to improve business performance.

## Making it happen

The FT produced a BT-sponsored supplement that explored the issue of collaboration across corporate enterprises, and distributed it to our entire European readership. Entitled "Understanding the Culture of Collaboration", this publication featured thought leadership insight from business and academic leaders, including Lynda Gratton of the London Business School. We published both a UK and a pan-European version of the supplement, tailored with relevant case studies and interviews, to reflect BT's different market position in the regions.

Following the publication of the supplement the Financial Times hosted and moderated three roundtable discussions on the subject of collaboration. Held in key European cities, they gave BT's senior managers the chance to engage one-to-one with their peers from leading European companies. This provided BTGS with the intimate communications strategy they wanted for their brand. As an example, the President of Sony Ericsson delivered a keynote speech to highlight the collaboration between two very different cultures from Japan and Sweden, in setting up a business partnership.

## The results

The benefits and longevity of the partnership was prominent with 44% of respondents keeping the bespoke publication for future reference and 37% of respondents believing it would help them with their work.

The FT Global Research department also analysed the results of the BT supplement's questionnaire and conducted research in the field.

121 people responded, 30% of whom were C-suite executives, and BT received some valuable insights. Tim Smart, the CEO of BT Global Services UK, said, "These findings suggest that businesses need better advice on how to collaborate effectively and how to manage the cultural changes that are inevitable when one organisation begins working closely with another." With only 13% of respondents saying they felt that technology presents an obstacle to effective collaboration, BT found this a positive sign that new common standards and 'Unified Communications' technologies were beginning to prove their worth as enablers for collaboration.