

# Brand Migration and Delivering the Values

## Challenge

Tata Group, one of India's oldest and largest private sector businesses, acquired Corus in 2007. The Group adopts a pragmatic approach to branding aiming to reassure stakeholders in India that it will not abandon traditional values in favour of global growth, and to reassure stakeholders in companies it acquires that their favourite brands will not be spoilt.

With Corus, after some hesitation, Tata Steel finally rebranded the business as Tata Steel Europe in 2010. By common consent, Corus was not a particularly strong brand, and few mourned its passing. Even so, there was some worry at Tata Steel as to what impact this rebranding might have on Corus's reputation – and on that of Tata Steel in India, where there was concern over events such as the mothballing of the Corus plant at Redcar in the north-east of England, with some observers questioning whether Tata Steel was still a caring employer.

After long thought the move did go ahead and we were asked to help with process of managing the migration of the brand in a “frugal but impactful” way over the course of 18 months.

## Approach

We were asked to help establish employees' attitudes to the new brand, facilitate the communication team's planning for the launch of the new visual identity, and to help manage a key event for the top 350 Tata managers in Europe.

Working closely with partners handling the timing and logistics of the physical rebranding process (logos, signage, web sites and addresses, livery, stationery etc) we developed the plans for the internal communication of the new brand at the major company locations, and with the broader mix of internal and external audiences at the Head Office in Millbank.

Focus groups in Holland and the UK identified some important insights into the perception of Tata and established baselines for the subsequent measurement of the impact of communication.

Findings revealed a hunger for more information on the Indian parent and an openness to learn more. But at the same time the discussions highlighted the need for local and senior managers to be more visible in communicating the plans, and “living the values”.

With Kay Purdie working alongside the Head Office communications team we helped plan for a groundbreaking interactive conference for the international leadership to align business and communication plans, improve ownership of corporate direction, increase knowledge and involvement in values communication and help build the top level network. A team of our facilitators worked closely with the Tata team to deliver the conference.

## Results

Brand communication is rolling out over the course of 18 months but the feedback from the leadership group has been helpful. We established 11 SMART objectives to focus efforts and achieved a rating of 80 – 90% on each (well exceeding our target of 70% +).

More instructive were the comments from members of the Tata leadership group:

*“It now feels as if the Company is committed to change”*

*“The last session (planning next steps) on our table really had some energy”*

*“We came as individuals and left as a team”*

In particular from the Head of Communications:

*“I have never returned from one of these with so many people being energised and enthusiastic about the event itself and motivated to get to work subsequently. Some of this was because people wanted the messages they received, but we have to recognise it was also the splendid way in which the conference was packaged. A number of people have said this was the most professional event they had been to at Tata Steel.”*

The work with Tata is ongoing.

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Couravel Limited	info@couravel.com
7 Castle Street	T: + 44 (0) 1732 371 252
Tonbridge,	M: + 44 (0) 7860 196 343
Kent, TN9 1BH	