

Independent trustee services or DIY? Time to be sociable!

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With such far-reaching changes taking place within the pensions world these days, it's little wonder many employees now feel a certain bemused sense of detachment, no doubt interspersed with a liberal dose of confusion, worry and perhaps moments of panic! Who can blame them given the drip-feed nature of 24-hour breaking news often adding layers of misinformation instead of clarity? Whilst it's the duty of trustees to answer questions and allay any fears pension scheme members may have, all too often lack of time or effort gets in the way. The use of independent trustee services (<http://www.dalriadatrustees.co.uk/services/>) in implementing an effective communications strategy just might be a way forward.

Too expensive! Ah yes, the predictable response in these cost-cutting, austere times we all seem to be living in. Now what? Start a meaningful dialogue with the company's IT department for starters. After all, this is the 21st century, the age of Facebook, Twitter, email and so much more. Like as not, many pension scheme members will have their own Facebook page at the very least, probably a Twitter account too.

The company has its own web site, which is good, albeit infrequently updated. But no Facebook page, no Twitter, no forum on the web site and an email address buried deep within an obscure page no one is ever liable to come across in a month of Sundays! What has the company been doing for the last decade?

The answer, of course, is missing out on some very effective channels of communication ideal for pension scheme members with all manner of queries and questions which have never been satisfactorily answered. Now is the time to put all of that right. It shouldn't cost an arm and a leg either, which is good news for the bottom line. Facebook is free and so is Twitter. And good forum software is readily available, often at little or zero cost.

Naturally, it makes sense for someone on the trustee board to take overall responsibility for social media content and communications. Initially, they'll have to 'manually' spread the word amongst employees, which can be achieved easily through a newsletter, if the company has one, or by sticking up details on the company's noticeboard. However this is achieved, don't expect an immediate rush of questions. It'll take time for employees to get used to the idea and to articulate their worries, concerns and the like.

But whatever the level of 'traffic', all queries must be answered in a timely manner. There is no good setting up such communication channels if no one bothers to respond. Interest will quickly fall away. And depending on the number of pension scheme members, the level of queries is likely to vary greatly, too, from maybe one or two a week to perhaps dozens. Who knows? The only way is to try it and see.

We are all lucky to be living now, at a time when the number of ways we can instantly communicate with each other has increased so dramatically. While 'snail mail' will always have a place within our lives, social media has changed the personal landscape like nothing else in history has done. Time we all realised its potential and embraced it fully.