Internal communication has a fundamental role to play to ensure that employees know what is going on and, at the same time, have a say about what important matters that is treated seriously.

Internal communication is corporate level information provided to all employees and the concurrent provision of opportunities for all employees to have a say about important matters that is taken seriously by line managers and senior managers.

Channels: are they working?

Content: are employees getting the information they want and need?

Conversations: are people communicating effectively?

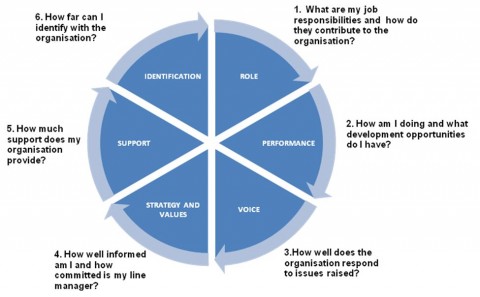
Voice: are there adequate opportunities for people to have a say?

Sentiment: what do employees think and feel about the organisation?

Behaviour: has employee behaviour been influenced by communication?

Return on investment (ROI)

The role of internal communications is much broader than just employer branding – ensuring that employees have a wider understanding of their organisation that includes vision, values, objectives, and performance. It has an information role of course, but really good internal communications is also about generating opportunities for employees to have a say in what the organisation does.



In a service based organisation, your employees are your brand. Internal communication is fundamental to employee engagement. Engaged employees create an engaging brand. And engaging brands are more successful.

The evidence for this simple equation is overwhelming, though, as ever with communication it is difficult to prove direct correlations.

In terms of return on investment, the Towers Watson Communication Report for 2009-10 found that companies that are highly effective communicators had 47 percent higher total returns to shareholders over the last five years compared with firms that are the least effective communicators.

However, in the same report, it was found that a little more than half of companies are effective at educating employees on company values. This is reinforced by research conducted for the CIPD in 2006 that showed that only 32 per cent of employees feel that they are both fully/fairly well informed and also have opportunities for upward feedback. This is group is, unsurprisingly, highly engaged.

In their report to the UK government in 2009, MacLeod and Clarke argue strongly that “there is evidence that improving engagement correlates with improving performance”. According to Gallup, in addition to profitability, other benefits of employee engagement include higher customer advocacy and higher productivity.

Gallup also found that eighty-six per cent of engaged employees say they very often feel happy at work and happy employees are more likely to provide a good service that reinforces organisational reputation than unhappy employees.

Every organization has need for internal communications, but it means many things to

many people. In reality, however, the primary driver of this function is simple—employees

and management must communicate in order to function.

Effective communication begins with the acknowledgment of the important role internal

communications plays as a vital method for advancing information sharing across all

directions of an organization: upward, downward and horizontally. To empower the

employees and ensure they carry a unified and coordinated message, an organization must

employ what we callTake the “*multi-dimensional distribution of strategic messages.*” Simply put

internal communications must provide the critical data points your team needs, as well as

address organizational concerns no matter when, where or how they surface.

We recognize that change is a constant in today’s business climate. With daily news reports

about corporate mergers and downsizing, employees are anxious about their future and

the health of the organizations they work for. During such turbulent times, it’s important

for leaders to be transparent and communicate openly with staff about both challenges

and opportunities. Providing timely, truthful and current information can help prevent

assumptions and rumors from alarming employees, as well as ground them in fact.

In the alternate scenario when communication is completely avoided, problems aren’t far

behind. While successful communications efforts and techniques often seem like mystic art

forms it is obvious when they are not properly applied. Wars are waged, marriages collapse,

companies fail and customers are lost when communication channels are poorly managed

or not present at all. Organizations need to evolve their internal communications approach

because in the spirit of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s famous phrase, “*I know it*

*when I see it;*” clearly recognizable organizational failure can often be tied to the absence of a

strategy for reaching internal stakeholders at critical times.

Employees are the face of an organization and have the ability to “sell” to external

stakeholders on many levels provided they have clear messages and properly understand their

organization’s goals. By giving employees insight into the strategy and business development

plans, they become more engaged as they understand how their unique role plays an integral

part in the organization’s success.

Enhancing employee understanding of the company’s missions and development goals

equips them with the knowledge to interact more effectively and confidently with

important stakeholders like investors, customers and corporate leaders and potential clients.

Opportunities to clarify and emphasize messages are another important advantage of a

strategic internal communications program. By clearly communicating targeted messages

through multiple channels, employees are informed and can then identify with the

organization’s short- and long-term goals as they perform their tasks. Open, informative,

honest and continual communication creates advocates among staff members who then

initiate a “ripple effect” by advancing the organization’s mission and programs both

internally and externally.

ICONIC

Internal Communications (IC) is a specialism

within the communication discipline. In Iconic’s

view, internal communication is the

process of organising and directing interaction

between people in an organisation in order to

connect them. Additionally, to enable people

to interpret developments and the direction

the organisation is moving in, as well as to

cooperate and share knowledge and ideas.

But also to meet the brand promise, generate

new ideas and accelerate change. In short,

The thoughts !

1. Building curiosity about the drive
   1. Online, through teaser emails
   2. Offline, by sticking posters
   3. Getting it announced in a town hall
   4. Maybe personal interaction after the mass email has been sent out
2. Understanding current communication scene
   1. Study the current communication mechanisms in place within Sumeru
   2. Understand the communication needs according to people
   3. Understand the communication challenges/problems
   4. Identify top two problems that people suggest to be fixed
   5. Conduct company wide survey to understand where Sumeru stands in terms of IC
   6. Conduct focused groups
   7. Meet senior management team and understand their needs and get their buy in and support
3. Understanding the current employee engagement
4. Along the way
   1. Posters around the office (Signboards)
   2. Basic communication workshops (Email, Verbal etc)
   3. Sumeru Handbook
   4. Newsletter
   5. Location change communication
   6. Language that Sumeru uses everywhere , a theme Sumeru should have
   7. Continuous team building and motivational workshops
   8. Communicating “The Sumeru Dream”
      1. The purpose of existence of Sumeru – the dream, the vision, the mission ; identification of it with the help of senior management
   9. Effectively communicate this within the organization
      1. How is Sumeru doing?
   10. The change communication – change in policy, structure of the organization
   11. The direction set by the management
   12. The value system – what the Sumeru brand stands for
   13. The evolution of Sumeru , the story and current scenario : a video, a book which can be gifted to current employees , new employees
   14. The process communication –
       1. How effective communication drive better process compliance
   15. Print media (posters, deskdrops, ac ducts, notice boards) for engaging communication
       1. Just print outs are boring !
   16. Glass walls for better expressions of the employees
   17. Compliments board !
   18. Achievement gallery !
   19. Teams are so isolated. No one knows whats happening on the other island. Sharing achievements, motivates !
   20. Communication involving masses – need to be simple, innovative and fun ! Cartoons get maximum attention.
   21. Kerry sketches ?
   22. Satyabhai’skinnect games can be used for internal comm – for enthusing participation in various activities ?
   23. Better networking at workplace – two or three random people everyday meet over a juice and understand each other better - casual coffees!
   24. Networking with CXOs – once in a month or week or something – one to one
   25. Creating the Sumeru policy documents
   26. Human beings, and organisations, are complex, contradictory, and varied. What works at one place, might not work at some other place.
   27. Artefacts (MOM format, WSR format)
   28. Engaged employees are more productive. That’s truth. No debate. – But as management, what is it that you want to drive? What are your expectations in terms of engagement? Based on your ideas, we can craft better strategy in terms of internal communication and engagement. But high possibility, they would not have an idea on this. Its never measured here. Oh this becomes an important information point – the engagement survey has never happened at sumeru !
   29. The Sumeru Culture/Hand book
   30. For a service based organizations, the employees are their best brand ambassadors. If they are better engaged, they will bring better business results. They need to receive the right news about the organization updates from the reliable source; else anyway they will get it at the water cooler. IC can add value there.
   31. New mouse pads with interesting messages – but such things are not driven by employee research and feedback. Not strategic in nature. How do they help? I am talking about all such items.
   32. Scientific approach to conduct meetings? How to get maximum out from a meeting? How to make meetings really useful ?
   33. Marketing campaigns with evocative ad hoc brand creations, seductive images, sensational metaphors, extraordinary testimonials, including the direct, warm, and personal participation of the firm’s leadership
   34. communication themed plays to create awareness
   35. strategic posters , emailers to tell employees that “They matter to us”, “We care for you”
   36. You do have to also say things that perhaps senior management aren’t that keen to hear. One of the professional skills that communicators are good at is how to feedback what needs to be said without saying it in such a way that it can’t be heard.
   37. Have 365 best meeting quotes and stick them on the meeting room doors, everyday new. Maybe even Guruji’s quotes.
   38. Identified communication touch points to get the message through :
       1. Mouse pads
       2. Sign in-off screens
       3. Email signature content
       4. Envelopes
       5. Payment stub
       6. Annual gifts
       7. Thanksgiving letters to employees
   39. Effectiveness of anything being launched at sumeru can be enhanced with internal communication consistent and better messaging – what needs to be kept “top of mind” of the organization :
       1. Policy
       2. Goal setting exercise
       3. Sales rewards program
       4. Recruitment
       5. Safety issues
       6. Administrative
   40. Hmm, creation of the sumeru brand !   
       What is core to our brand ? What is our story? What are the promises that we want to make and we are ready to give life for that cause ?
       1. We just don’t want to hand a handbook to an employee – we want him to imbibe the culture! He is a team now ☺
   41. Do employees feel a sense of a team with the senior management?
   42. A Harvard Business School study conducted over 11 years showed a variety of areas in which companies with the right culture outperformed their counterparts. Revenues were 4.1 times higher, stock prices were 12.2 times higher, and return on investment was 15 times higher.\* (<http://thefinancialbrand.com/17984/building-internal-culture-for-banks-and-credit-unions/>)
   43. As the largely commoditized financial services industry shakes off recent economic pressure, now is the time to assess the effectiveness of your organization’s internal communication and corporate culture; you might just decide it’s time to invest a little more in yourself.
   44. In the above point of creating curiosity about the drive :
       1. Having communication games – Chinese whisper, LS (QNET game)
       2. Having communication theme based plays
   45. Haa, the culture gets built by the people whom we hire ! They bring in that spark of creativity, joy and fun in them. If we hire boring people, they will only add up to the overall boredom that the organization is having :D
   46. SG : Why effective communication is a key : The less people know, the more they yell.<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2007/01/>

The management communication is more [asynchronous](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2011/01/one-way-to-look-at-the-internet-mobile-web-and-tablets.html)! The last ten years have seen an explosion in [asynchronous](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2011/01/one-way-to-look-at-the-internet-mobile-web-and-tablets.html), broadcast messaging. Asynchronous, because unlike a phone call, the sender and the recipient aren’t necessarily interacting in real time. And broadcast, because most of the messaging that’s growing in volume is about one person reaching many, not about the intimacy of one to one. That makes sense, since the internet is at its best with low-resolution mass connection.

*It's like throwing a thousand bottles into the ocean and waiting to see who gets your message.*

Amazon, eBay, Twitter, blogs, Pinterest, Facebook--they are all tools designed to make it easier to reach more and more people with a variation of faux intimacy. And this broadcast approach means that communication breaks down all the time... we have mass, but we've lost resiliency

* 1. "Let's talk," uses today's interaction to make it more likely you have one tomorrow. And a dialogue leads to connection, which leads to trust which leads to engagement.
  2. Yes, it's surprisingly difficult in today's oversaturated communications world to succeed even with an offer of "let's talk," but it's demonstrably better than the alternative.
  3. Drip, drip, drip.
  4. Two different things:             A crowd is a tribe without a leader.             A crowd is a tribe without communication. Most organizations spend their time marketing to the crowd. Smart organizations assemble the tribe. - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  5. Conversations among the members of your marketplace happen whether you like it or not. Good marketing  encourages the right sort of conversations.  - See more at: http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading\_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf
  6. Marketing is the way your people answer the phone, the typesetting on your bills and your returns policy - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  7. Living and breathing an authentic story is the best way to survive in a conversation-rich world. - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  8. ... it takes only two things to turn a group of people into a tribe:         \* A shared interest         \* A way to communicate     The communication can be one of four kinds:         \* Leader to tribe         \* Tribe to leader         \* Tribe member to tribe member         \* Tribe member to outsider     So a leader can help increase the effectiveness of the tribe and its members by         \* transforming the shared interest into a passionate goal and desire for change;         \* providing tools to allow members to tighten their communications; and         \* leveraging the tribe to allow it to grow and gain new members.     Most leaders focus only on the third tactic. A bigger tribe somehow equals a better tribe. In fact, the first two tactics almost always lead to more impact.  Every action you take as a leader can affect these three elements, and the challenge is to figure out which one to maximize.  - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  9. Human beings can't help it: we need to belong. One of the most powerful of our survival mechanisms is to be part of a tribe, to contribute to (and take from) a group of like-minded people. We are drawn to leaders and to their ideas, and we can't resist the rush of belonging and the thrill of the new. ... We want to belong not to just one tribe, it turns out, but to many. And if you give us tools and make it easy, we'll keep joining.  Tribes make our lives better. And leading a tribe is the best life of all. - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  10. Communicate. Connect. Change.
  11. Many people are starting to realize that they work a lot and that working on stuff they believe in (and making things happen) is much more satisfying than just getting a paycheck and waiting to get fired (or die). - See more at: <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf>
  12. The act of giving someone a smile, of connecting to a human, of taking initiative, of being surprising, of being creative, of putting on a show—these are things that we do for free all our lives. And then we get to work and we expect to merely do what we’re told and get paid for it - See more at: http://edbrenegar.typepad.com/leading\_questions/2010/07/50-random-memorable-seth-godin-quotes.html#sthash.WwnL57p4.dpuf

Big groups are perfect places for the efficient communication of emotion. They are terrific for the impact that comes from watching your peers shake their heads in agreement simultaneously. The power of groupthink doesn't happen in an electronic memo, but it can sure be powerful in a big room.

What's helpful is to realize that you have a choice when you communicate. You can design your products to be easy to use. You can write so your audience hears you. You can present in a place and in a way that guarantees that the people you want to listen will hear you. Most of all, you get to choose who will understand (and who won't).

If you're unable to have substantial conversations with your boss and co-workers, go get some professional help. It's not personal, it's business.

Unhappiness compounds.

Unaddressed, it compounds into frustration.

And frustration is the soul killer, the destroyer of worker and customer relationships, loyalty and progress.

The solution is pretty simple: address the unhappiness. Change the system or talk about the problem or acknowledge it if that's all that can be done. None of this can happen, though, unless there's communication.

Most open door policies are window dressing. Most, "is everything okay with your dinner?" is rote. True communication, actual intention (and action) in digging deeper, is difficult work. If it doesn't feel like you're working at it, you're probably not doing it right.

From noise to the perfect music ☺

The challenge of communication isn't to never miscommunicate, it's to cut down the time between the interaction and the realization that the communication didn't get through. Because the sooner we know we're not connecting, the sooner we can fix it.

Organizations that are good at flagging the misunderstood internal messages are far more likely to move quickly, in sync, than the ones that assume that messages from on high are never to be questioned. When in doubt, ask.