



GUIDE

# 7 tips to create business impact with internal communications in 2020

Communicating with your workforce  
in the age of employee experience

*Your workforce demographics are changing, and that means your organisation should change accordingly. Gen Y and Z employees want to feel engaged and expect different things from their employer today than 50 years ago. They demand increased collaboration, transparency, and feedback. They require tools that can set them up for success and expect an environment where internal communication plays a greater role than ever before.*

*As an employer, you have to take these changes into account and act upon them to keep your business performing. Here are 7 actionable tips to make your internal communication create impact and drive business in 2020.*

## **Make your internal communication a cross-departmental effort**

Internal communication has a great impact on how employees experience their employer. That means you have to position it as a part of the overall employee experience and represent it throughout the entire company.

Instead of making a siloed internal communication team, the internal communication of your company should be a cross-departmental effort. Take a more holistic view of the entire employee journey and incorporate internal communication everywhere in the organisation. The true purpose of internal communication is actually to build bridges between the different departments.



**Your internal communication team should not be operating in isolation within the organisation. Make sure your team is a representation of every department of the company.**



## 2 Ask yourself why, what and how

According to recent research on Employee Experience conducted by Willis Towers Watson, the best companies in the employees' eyes are companies that excel in inspiring their employees with a strong connection to the mission and purpose of the company. Because employees want to be aware of your objectives and how to get there. They want to be able to feel confident in their role. They want to feel valued as a member of the team.

Stimulating that employee mindset is exactly what your internal communication should do. A well-functioning internal communications system can motivate employees to work toward common goals. By letting them in on the 'why', companies can significantly engage their employees in the 'what'.

That means internal communication is not about sending out practical announcements anymore, but about delivering true business impact.



With every piece of information you want to communicate, ask yourself these 3 questions first:

1. Why are you communicating?
2. What are you communicating?
3. What kind of business impact are you creating?



# 3 Trigger your employees with the right content

If you want to achieve the desired impact with your internal communication efforts, the content you share has to be available to everyone across the entire organisation. Many companies think that deploying a mobile app is the solution for this challenge, but creating an all-inclusive internal communication strategy is much more than just deploying a mobile app.

You have to consider that you have to reach all different kinds of employees; young & old, white & blue-collar employees, desk & non-desk users, mobile & desktop users, local, global, ... Therefore, you have to make sure to select a tool that is able to reach every employee in the organisation, in whatever context they operate (from office desk to production line).

On top of that, you have to trigger your employees. The best way to grab their attention is to serve them close to heart news that is relevant to the day-to-day context in which they are operating: company news related to their local site of operation, their region or their country. Seizing the attention of your employees with close to heart news creates an excellent opportunity to serve them global corporate news (like a message from your CEO) afterwards.



**Make sure your messages & tools can reach every corner of your organisation. Before you send out a piece of communication, always check if your employees really can relate to it and map the possible coverage.**

# 4 Put a local hero in the spotlight

Your internal communication will be more convincing and the message will be stronger when it comes from the most qualified people associated with the specific topic. Both for your local and global company news, you should pick the so-called "*local heroes*", the employees that best represent the message you are sharing. They are recognised as experts in the field and will add more credibility to your message.



**According to the topic you want to share, choose your "*local heroes*" and let them write about it and share the news in your channels.**

# 5 Use different media formats in your message

There are different options to make your content more engaging and appealing for your workforce. The most important thing is that the way you communicate has to fit your corporate culture, your brand and the way how you want to be perceived by your employees.

Here are two formats that work well:

## Short-form video (snackable content)

Short-form videos are very easily digestible. This format gives you much more flexibility in terms of creativity and how you want to tell a specific story.

Creating a video might sound intimidating but making one does not require professional recording equipment and advanced video editing programs. Modern-day smartphone cameras are today powerful enough to help you kickstart this initiative. Just start making videos and learn along the way. Your employees will highly appreciate the effort.

## GIFs & emojis

Smartphones have introduced animated images like gifs and emojis in our professional lives. Their ability to simplify complex stories in an understandable manner make them very useful in all sorts of communication, including internal messages. The good thing is they are cross-device compatible, so both your mobile and desktop users will be able to see them. However, the use of gifs and emojis do not suit every context and every corporate culture.



**Think about the core of your message and communicate according to your corporate culture and your brand. Make sure the format you choose always supports your message.**



## 6 Measure your internal communication efforts

Establishing internal communication initiatives also requires a system that measures the performance of your initiatives. In the end, your internal communication efforts are an investment that you need to evaluate like any other company investment. Having the right measurable data in place will help you build your business case, and eventually optimise your internal communication.

Collecting data will enable you to identify the content that most resonates with your audience (employees) and will help you steer your internal communication strategy and efforts. Therefore, data like the time when your content was read, demographic information about the user (age, department, white & blue collar etc.) & content engagement data will prove to be beneficial in driving your decisions and optimising your internal communication initiatives.



**Choose an end-to-end communication tool to share your content that provides in-depth reporting of how your messages are performing. Look at your internal communication the same way as you look at your external marketing initiatives, measure your efforts and optimise them granularly.**

# 7 Choose the right tools for your message

We already touched upon the importance of employee experience and how it tightly tangles with internal communication. But how can you merge employee experience and internal communication in perfect harmony? People expect their employer to consider their individual context and provide an end-to-end experience, disregarding internal structures silos.

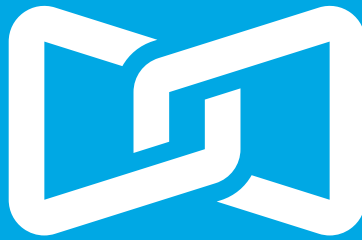
Therefore you should not be using a fragmented solution, but opt for a solution that facilitates, encourages & inspires collaboration across multiple departments. And there's the rub. Tools like Slack, Workplace by Facebook, Microsoft Teams etc. are all part of your company's communication tool stack, but they don't offer an end-to-end solution.

For example, while chat focused tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams are focusing on facilitating the communication needs of day to day operations, tools like Workplace by Facebook are more community-focused.



**Strong internal communication tools focus on both operations and community-building. Don't cut your internal communications into various fragmented channels and tools, but choose a tool that offers communication on both a very specific (e.g. targeted individuals) as on a very large scale (e.g. all factories in Europe).**





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