



Clockwise Handy Guide

Effective Internal Communications for Brand Success

**Clockwise
Marketing.**

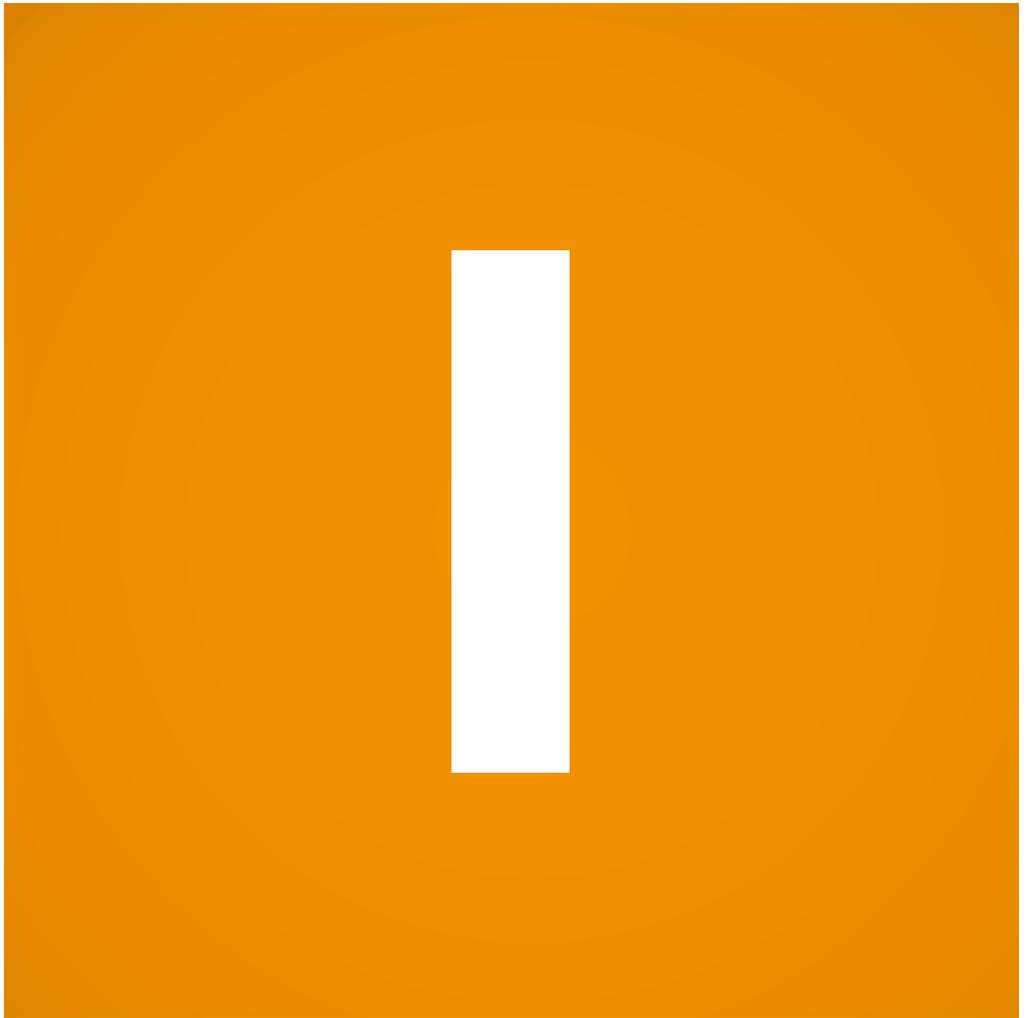
Leading through change

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No matter how big your budget for external marketing, it is the people representing a business that have the biggest impact on brand image. This essential guide covers how you can ensure internal communications are working to reinforce and support your marketing efforts and driving business growth as per your intentions.

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Introduction.

We see it all too often. Companies launch themselves into their external corporate affairs, looking for quick growth through exposure and engagement. Business and marketing strategies are drawn up with vigour, messages and media planned and staff recruited to take the business to new heights.

But the key to successful and consistent growth is dependent upon the internal health of an organisation.

Planning is essential, we're not disputing that. The structure, planning and execution of internal communications and procedures is fundamental and can give an organisation a major strategic advantage in these changing times. Ensuring your corporate image lives up to expectations, depends heavily on the people representing it, whether they are customer facing, or not.

Effective internal
communications



Effective external
communications



Positive
corporate
culture



Great brand
perceptions



Brand
success



Shaping a positive corporate identity, culture and image.

Corporate identity is the manner in which a business presents itself to its stakeholders. The components of corporate identity are visual identity and corporate culture and this brings about corporate image – the external perceptions of the organisation.



Visual
identity



Corporate
culture



Corporate
image

A company's identity should always be built and maintained to accord with and facilitate business objectives.

Corporate culture refers to the shared values, beliefs and behaviours of a company's employees which can often take shape with shared and reinforced messages regarding the company's goals, strategies, structure and business approaches. Elements of corporate culture include physical environment, human resource practices and the cumulative traits of the people the company hires. Culture needs to be nurtured and managed to ensure

optimum buy-in from employees, so that they are equipped and willing, to represent the business in the most positive manner. Corporate vision, mission and values must be accepted, retained and represented by employees - and constantly reinforced and reflected in management practices.

Just as corporate culture is at the very heart of an organisation's success, its employees should be at the heart of its strategy. How and what you communicate with them is paramount to your business and its power to thrive from the inside out.



Evidencing poor corporate culture.

Company

ESTABLISHED JEWELLERS

Selling high end, big brands. Lots of stores nationwide and also selling online.

Scenario

A customer enquires about a watch in store and is told there is a bigger selection to choose from online, and some in the sale. When the customer asks if she can order online and have it delivered to store the assistant answers *"no – we don't match our internet prices in-store, but you could order it to store and I could give you a bit of a discount (from the full price)..."*

The assistant sees the look of confusion on the customer's face and continues... *"It's stupid – I know"*. The customer thanks the lady and promptly walks out the store.

Conclusion

If the sales assistant was aware of the reasons for this element of the business pricing strategy and was able to highlight the reasons for this and the benefits to the customer rather than 'down' the company and its practices – the customer would probably have proceeded with a purchase of some kind.

This tendency to undermine a company can happen frequently in certain trades and instances of direct selling, where the tradesman are in a position to do this directly to the customer and out of 'earshot' of Directors or other employees. This is a symptom of lack of trust and common goal between the organisation and the employee.



What is internal communication?

Communications that occur inside the organisation are all **internal communications**. This can also be referred to as **employee communication** or **employee relations**. This sub-function of corporate communication has become increasingly critical, as organisations have realised the importance of nurturing relationships with employees as a way of ensuring a **strong** and **positive** corporate image, **driving growth**, and **retaining** and **enhancing the best talent**.



Internal communication roles sit under different departments - depending on the structure of an organisation. They could be under HR, Communications, Marketing, or alongside the CEO.

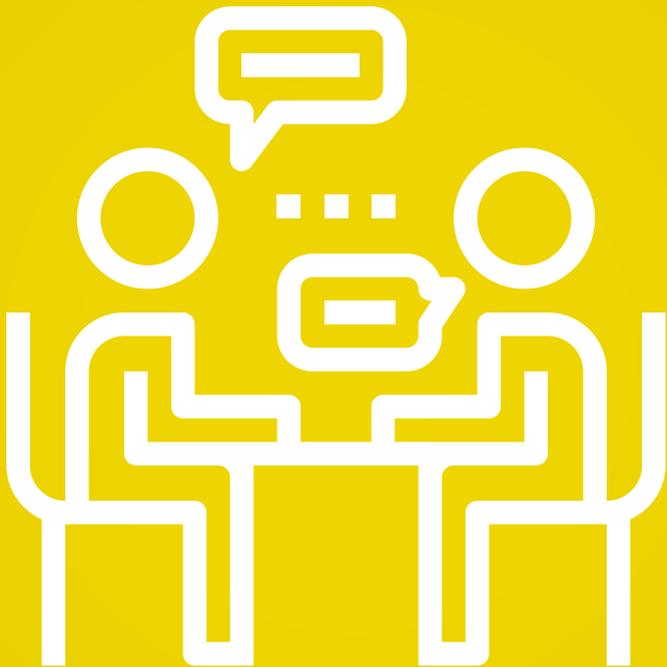


Objectives of internal communication.

The work of internal communication, shapes and is shaped by the organisation's strategy and culture. General objectives of internal communication are:

- **To aid employee understanding of the big picture and how they fit in**
- **To provide a common set of goals for employees to share responsibility for**
- **To show that you value and care for your staff as individuals**
- **To aid productivity amongst employees**
- **To build trust and loyalty**
- **To inspire better leaders**
- **To encourage vigilant managers**
- **To build a culture of communication – where staff learn how to communicate openly and effectively, because they are subject to it.**

Above all, taking control of internal communications will mean that a company can communicate facts, prevent unnecessary speculation and reduce negative instances of hearing things 'on the grapevine' or through 'Chinese whispers'.



Effective internal communications:

Open and objective communication in the company's tone of voice, as dictated in the corporate/brand guidelines

Clear, jargon-free, succinct language

Consistent and regular communication



Providing channels for feedback



Two-way dialogue & engagement

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEES AND WHAT APPEALS TO THEM

Using the right digital tools



Including metrics

PROMOTION OF EMPLOYEE RESOURCES AND TRAINING



Using a cascade system to ensure thorough and accurate messages from the top down

Sharing industry news & trends



Maintaining transparency

Avoiding communication overload

BEING VISUAL



Recognition and praise for success

NEVER LOSING SIGHT OF THE BIGGER PICTURE



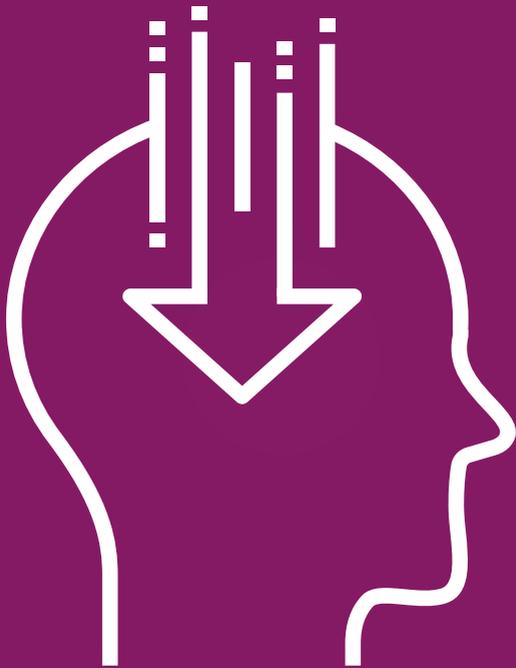
Making it entertaining and inspiring action

John Sylvester

IPM

“The power of communication lies in keeping your audience involved in its evolution, because it is their interaction and interest that will mean the difference between communication that goes nowhere and is read by no one, and communication that can motivate entire workforces.”





Common channels for internal communications.

The following channels should be carefully considered in the light of the actual message to be communicated. An Internal Communications Manager would ideally plan the delivery of every message and choose the appropriate and most effective channel.

Email

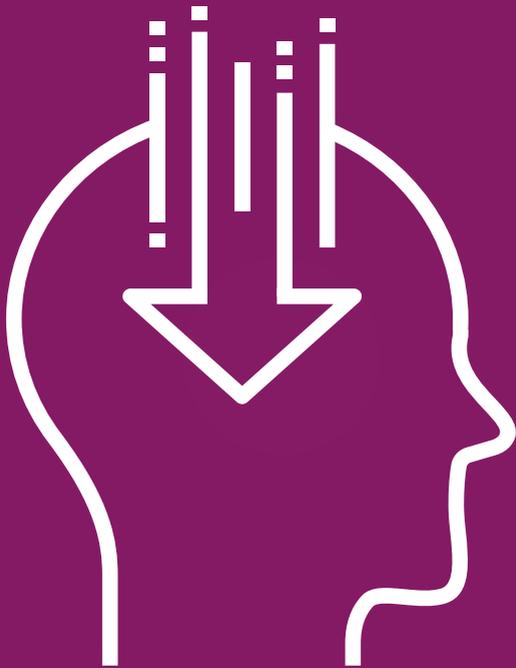
One of the most common and versatile channels – messages can be composed, sent and received in very little time. But email is often overused and some people rely too heavily on it. Don't underestimate how much more effective telephone or face or face communication could be in the delivery of certain messages. Tone of voice and body language can really help the receiver with understanding and interpretation.

Posters/Banners

These are an ideal way to promote and reinforce the brand, or an event, or competition. They should be strategically located in the building where they will receive the most attention - next to the water coolers, in the cafeteria, by the lifts, or even inside toilet cubicles.

Intranet

These internal hubs will vary in capability – some will have search functions and databases so that employees can search for fellow employees and contacts, HR policies and procedures and corporate brand templates and styles. The home page is often magazine style and can incorporate a company news feed and latest information. A poorly designed intranet on the other hand, could be a nightmare to manage, sap at resources, and staff may not even use it.



Common channels for internal communications.

Newsletters/Magazines

These can be printed or electronic, and are a great way for employees to engage in company affairs. The Editor or Communications Manager can also invite volunteer staff writers to contribute. Regular columns create a following, and over time build credibility and readership. A newsletter can also be used to introduce new staff and say goodbye to any leavers.

Team Meetings

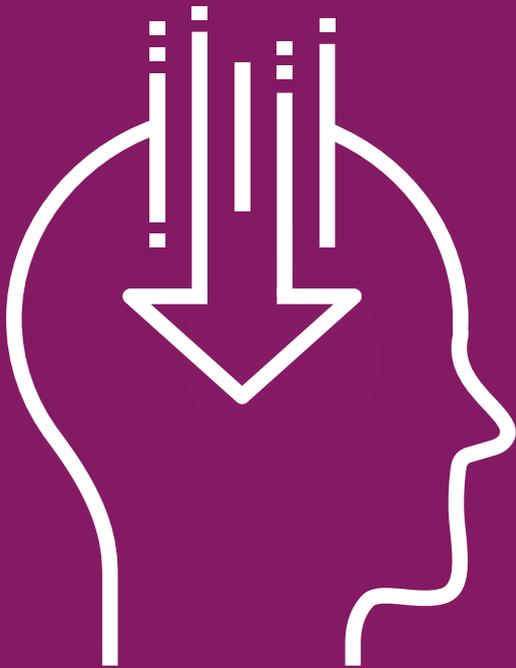
Some corporate messages are best communicated at small and confined meetings with a direct team, held by the direct manager. Messages should be planned and prepared – and dissemination of notes should also be considered.

Staff Events/ Team Building

It is essential to build morale and a positive ethos amongst employees. Some organisations nominate a 'Social Rep' to plan social events and activities to promote engagement amongst individuals outside of the working environment. This sort of socialising is a great way to build relationships across different teams and departments. A company budget for staff events is worth its weight in gold.

Corporate Staff Briefings

A good internal communications strategy will use a cascade system for messaging. For example the Managing Director will feed a piece of important information to other Directors, who will then pass this on to their Department Managers or Team Leaders, and they to their team members – and the information is cascaded in this way. A Corporate Staff Briefing however, is good practice every few months – to give all employees the chance to hear directly from the Managing Director or Chief Executive and to ask questions or raise concerns. This is also the chance to dispel any myths or rumours and to motivate and inspire the audience, re-connecting them to the vision and mission of the organisation.



Common channels for internal communications.

Social Media/Video Messages/Webcasts

These channels are most relevant and contemporary – and most likely to capture attention and form views and opinions. But you will want them to be positive views and opinions! There are ways to ensure that social media and other online communications are helping to drive business success:

- **Content should be fresh and relevant and comments, topical**
 - **The company's 'tone of voice' should be reflected and consistent**
 - **Senior leaders should be encouraged to join the conversation**
 - **These mediums can be ideal in generating ideas and obtaining quick feedback on new products and services**
 - **Show employees that you're listening and acting on feedback**
 - **Ensure it is employee lead and self-moderated to ensure open and transparent communication**
 - **Make it optional, but promote it as a collaboration tool across all business operations**
- **Use it as a research tool or for staff polls or surveys**
 - **Use it as a platform for running competitions, so that employees have more reason to use this method of engagement**
 - **Nominate a channel owner, to build, drive and monitor it**



Internal communications strategy.

Fundamentally, an internal communications strategy should address where an organisation is currently, and where it wants to be – then state how it intends to get there. **Titles should include:**

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Include any future challenges for the organisation and why employee engagement is so important.

CURRENT SITUATION

Include any research and statistics from a survey or audit.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

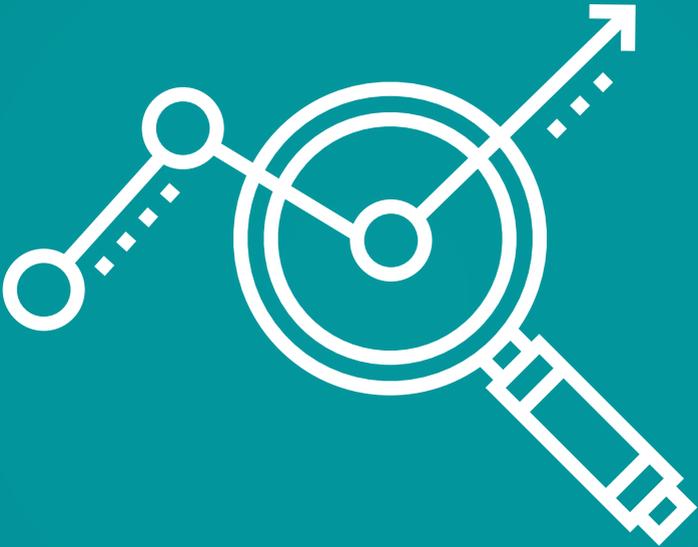
Include the key drivers that will influence the strategy. These are typically vision and values; business plan; leadership; employee engagement; people strategy; corporate communications strategy.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE

Include the principles that will guide the effective delivery of the strategy, such as providing timely and targeted communications; always communicating in plain English; looking for opportunities to create dialogue and engagement. Clarify the aims and objectives, the tactics and the success measures, as well as the communication approach.

SUMMARY

Provide a summary to show how drivers are linked to objectives, tactics and success measures.



Quickfire ways to deliver and sustain great internal communications.

Research your audience

collectively but pay attention to individuals who tend to have a more negative take on things that go on within the organisation. This should be addressed with their line manager discreetly, but with the intention of clarifying information and understanding where the negativity stems from.



- **Tailor the communication and medium to their needs.**
- **Communicate in a regular and meaningful way.**
- **Show evidence** that you have incorporated feedback and views.
- **Celebrate achievements** and successes company wide.
- **Welcome** new starters and thank leavers for their contribution to the business.

Listen to what employees have to say and show that you have factored in their input and are grateful for their feedback.

Be consistent with tone of voice and approach.

AND FINALLY:

Make sure senior colleagues understand the imperative link between effective internal communication and brand success!



**Clockwise
Marketing.**



Your internal marketing is as important as your external.

**Talk to us for help with
internal communications
strategy and planning.**

Contact Clockwise Marketing

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