BEST-IN-CLASS PRACTICES IN EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS:
AN UPDATE

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NOVEMBER 21, 2013

TECTONIC MOVEMENT:
RESHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

"OLD MODEL"

1. Activity, Even as Focused on Employee Satisfaction, Motivation
2. Communicated for the Corporation
3. Employees Viewed as a Homogenous Audience
4. Awareness is Key Measure
5. Boundary-Driven: Siloed, Two-Way Information Flow

CREATING VALUE IN TODAY’S ENVIRONMENT

1. Analytics-Based, Business Performance, Outcomes and Strategy Socialization
2. Discussion, Dialogue, and Debate
3. Optimized Corporation’s Ability to Communicate
5. Segmented; Targeted for Influence, Engagement, Social Prowess
Overall Business Objective:

Identify best practices for employee communication in an environment that is increasingly globalized, digitized, and empowered.
**Process:** Dual-mode research approach for discovery

- **Explore** (August 2012 - January 2013)
  - Depth interviews with best-in-class global internal communicators
  - Identify structure, philosophies, practices
  - Identify tools and assets for achieving success

- **Assess** (February - May 2013)
  - Analysis and theme identification
  - White paper, info graphics

- **Quantify** (June - November 2013)
  - Survey of global organizations on internal communications topics
  - Measure key principles, priorities
  - Utilization of specific approaches, strategies, tools, or techniques

- **Discover** (December 2013 - January 2014)
  - Best-in-class practices for organizational communication in an environment that is increasingly globalized, digitized, and empowered
  - Includes ID of structures, strategies, tools, and techniques

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**EXPLORE & ASSESS INTERVIEWS:**

Engaged KRC Research in 2012 to interview internal communications professionals at 10 world-class corporations

Chosen based on global scope, market leadership and perceived effectiveness in internal communications (frequenters on the most-admired or best-places to work lists, awards)

**GOAL:** to better understand internal communications methods and practices in global organizations
Explore and Assess: Revealed approach, challenges, and practices of best-in-class organizations

Common Factors
- Tangibles: organizational structure and tools, practices
- Intangibles: Innate beliefs, commitment to keeping company informed.

“10 from 10” Lessons
- Managing up, and managing down
- Alignment with business strategy
- Keeping goals in-sight
- Authentic and consistent, multi-channel communications
- Measurement

Be a business leader
Have line of sight to end-goal when communicating change
Challenge others to contribute to growth

Develop a roadmap for change
Create an internal stakeholder map
Act strategically with company leaders

Adopt authentic voice
Utilize line of sight managers
Dedicated content strategy

Measure!
The Return: Innate belief in the importance of employee communications

Informed employee | Knowledgeable about company | Feels engaged, and potentially even valued

Is more productive | Longer tenured | Becomes a brand ambassador

Best in Class Perspectives:

“We are business leaders first, communicators second. And the objective isn’t the best internal communication plan, or the best program on a specific project. Our job when we come in everyday is: How do we help the organization sell more trucks, sell more engines, as competitively and at the highest margins possible?”

Best-in-Class Practices in Employee Communication: Through the Lens of 10 Global Leaders

Institute for Public Relations Commission on Organizational Communication
SECTION 3: THE QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

QUANTIFY SURVEY:

- Perceived internal communications efficacy
- Challenges
- Recognized importance of best-in-class practices, mindset
- Current adoption, aspirations to adopt best-in-class practices, mindset
- Biggest priorities going forward

GOAL:

Who's employing Best-in-class practices for organizational communication, and do they contribute to success?

KRC Research conducting online survey of internal communicator in global companies in 2013.
Preliminaries: Top challenges pertain to resources, the environment and proving value

› Adequate staffing for internal communications
› Fast pace of the work in your team
› Operating across multiple brands
› CEO does not understand value of employee communications

› Generational differences among employees in your team
› Generational differences among employees in the company
› Adequate budgeting for internal communications needs
› Technology infrastructure, excluding social media
› Social media strategy and infrastructure
› Operating in diverse cultures
› Media coverage challenges: negative coverage, misinformation, lack of coverage and context
› Marketplace competition for your talent
› Skills and competencies of internal communications teams
› Universal metrics/measurements to adequately assess engagement

Preliminaries: There’s some disconnect with goal-setting, evaluation and organization alignment

Efficacy in evaluating projects, initiatives, activities, outcomes
Goal-setting efficacy
Alignment with organizational goals
Team meets goals set
Team contributes to the success of the organization

1. Low end of scale, negative

Potential barriers: Unforeseen priorities arise, lack of time, internal politics

Chart shows mean score for measurements
Preliminaries: There are also some gaps in perceived importance of best-in-class practices

**Importance more readily recognized:**
- Way to listen and learn from employees
- Roadmap outlining organizational changes
- Periodic assessment of employee perceptions
- Internal communications team leader report to corporate communications leader
- Team leader having oversight of all key internal communications and employees
- Team leaders participate in total organization strategy
- Employees informed in a timely fashion
- Employees informed about the context of the issue at hand.
- Letting employees know what to expect from organizational change and developments

**Importance not as apparent:**
- Internal social media sites/platforms
- Listing of all internal stakeholders
- Communicating impact of organizational change and developments on employees
- Analytics to regularly gauge employee engagement
- Challenging next generation to contribute to organizational growth
- Voice that is authentic to organization
- "Line-of-sight" managers as communicators
- Measurement and key metrics to benchmark strategies and programs
- Utilizing messaging platforms consistently

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Preliminaries: Few of these factors are common practice for most communicators

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Highlighted: Three-quarters or more are currently doing.
Based upon mean importance scores for each attribute.

### Preliminaries: Organizational mindset on return, shared viewpoints not as aligned with best in class

- High end of scale, positive
- To be successful, internal communicators should be seen as business people, with an expertise in communications.
- An organization should be able to clearly and concisely articulate the purpose and value of change for its future success and for employees.
- Strong internal communication will have a positive return for the total organization that need not be proven at every juncture.
- There are shared viewpoints up and down the chain of command about the total organization at-large and the way to communicate.

More aspirational, than actual. Few say this describes their current organization.

Chart shows mean score for measurements.
What’s Next: Organizational clarity, and improving analytics as well as digital skills are top priorities

**Improve organizational clarity around strategy and direction**

Become more adept at analytics and how to incorporate into programming

Improve skills around digital, social, planning, engagement and content

Explore more and varied social media platforms internally to improve engagement

Rediscover the workforce in terms of worldview and mindset

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**Next steps:**

- Complete data collection
- Analyze data
- Share findings