

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR STATISTICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**PHASE II – INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT,  
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR STATISTICAL INSTITUTIONS – PHASE II**

### **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT,**

### **MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

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## Introduction

Recognizing the importance of strategic communication, the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics endorsed a two-year priority project – the Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions. This project is intended to compliment the “Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics”<sup>1</sup> and supports the “Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.”<sup>2</sup>

Phase I of the project, completed in 2018 and endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2019, resulted in the production of the “Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions – Phase I”. The purpose of the framework is to guide statistical offices in the development of a strategic approach to protect, enhance and promote the organization’s reputation and brand. Phase I is intended to help statistical organizations amplify their corporate image through proactive user consultation; engagement with and understanding of target audiences; channels, tools and approaches designed to meet particular audiences’ needs; messages tailored to specific audiences; media engagement; and measurement of the results and impact of communication activities. Phase I of the framework also includes proposed skill sets to support a professional external communications program, a communication maturity model and roadmap, and guidelines to create a proactive response strategy to issues that have the potential to cause reputational damage.

Within the context of today’s ever-changing data environment, many statistical organizations are in the process of developing or reviewing their strategic objectives and their business models – leading to the articulation or review of their mission and/or vision statements. More and more statistical organizations are involved in government-wide data strategy formulation. For statistical organizations to become strategic partners in the development of a national data strategy and for the successful development of a solid business model or the transition to a new one, the vision must resonate with staff at all levels. When mission and vision statements are understood and supported by employees, they become engaged.

Phase II of the Strategic Communications Framework Project builds on the experience and momentum gained in Phase I and focuses on the development of guidelines and strategic approaches to internal communications; the value of and ways to engage staff so that they can become ambassadors of the organization’s key messages to external partners and stakeholders; and the development of stakeholder engagement strategies. It also explores, from a communications perspective, statistical organizations’ involvement in the development of national data strategies. This document, one of two outputs of Phase II, features the guidelines and strategic approaches to effective internal communications and the development of organizational culture, mission, vision and value statements.

As with Phase I of the Project, the components of this framework are offered as guidelines and are not intended to be prescriptive. Statistical institutions are invited to use the two phases of the framework in their entirety, or to use only those elements that help support their business needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics, <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51139>

<sup>2</sup> Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, <http://www.unece.org/?id=3207>

## Chapter 1: Employee engagement and internal communications

Effective internal communication is critical to an organization's well-being. Even the most compelling vision for the development and growth of a statistical organization cannot inspire or motivate employees unless it is shared with every staff member in a form that resonates with them both individually and collectively. An inspired and motivated workforce, in turn, is the decisive element that enables a statistical organization to achieve its mission.

### 1.1 What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a relatively new concept coined around 1990 by William Kahn, a professor at Boston University's Questrom School of Business. His research, presented in a paper entitled "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work"<sup>3</sup>, argued that the problem was less about employees being the right "fit," or lacking financial rewards, but fundamentally it was about how they *felt*. Figure 1 below describes the elements of Kahn's employee emotion: meaningfulness; safety and availability.

Figure 1 – Elements of employee emotion (based on Kahn)



As the result of ever-changing social environments within organizations, defining employee engagement today goes beyond Kahn's theory and has become a more complex term. Some authors still conceive employee engagement as a psychological concept while others believe it to be a concept related to performance or attitudes. Gallup suggests that engaged employees are "psychologically committed to their work, go above and beyond their basic job expectations, and want to play a key role in fulfilling the mission of their organizations", whilst disengaged employees were are said to be "uninvolved and unenthusiastic about their jobs and love to tell others how bad

<sup>3</sup>[http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_url?url=http://www.academia.edu/download/33787773/WILLIAM\\_A.\\_KAHN.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm3QBjY-wl105-tmCljb75wM737yOA&nossl=1&oi=scholar](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?url=http://www.academia.edu/download/33787773/WILLIAM_A._KAHN.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm3QBjY-wl105-tmCljb75wM737yOA&nossl=1&oi=scholar)

things are”<sup>4</sup>. Kevin Kruse defines employee engagement as “the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.”<sup>5</sup>

We define employee engagement as the extent to which a staff member's personal goals and interests align with the vision and goals of the organization where they work.

## **1.2 Benefits of engagement**

An engaged workforce produces measurable organizational benefits. According to Gallup research, engaged employees are ten times more likely to strongly agree that they can take creative risks at work than actively disengaged employees.

“compared with disengaged teams, engaged teams show 24% to 59% less turnover, 10% higher customer ratings, 21% greater profitability, 17% higher productivity, ..., 70% fewer safety incidents and 41% less absenteeism”.<sup>6</sup>

It makes intuitive sense that staff with high levels of dedication and enthusiasm will gain greater satisfaction from their jobs. It is worth highlighting a possibly less intuitive finding from Gallup, though: customers react positively to engaged employees.

We conclude that statistical organizations' data users and respondents will be better served, and will place higher value on our organizations, if their contact is with well-informed and motivated staff.

In short, some of the benefits of having committed employees are:

1. Increased productivity
2. Lower costs
3. Faster problem solving
4. Higher quality of goods/service
5. Promotion of better practices
6. Increased trust between employees and leaders
7. Understanding and support in critical times
8. Embracing a culture open to change

## **1.3 Types of Employees**

Knowing one's employees is a critical first step. Employees are critical to the organization's success as they both influence one another and influence external audiences' perceptions, especially those of customers.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) proposes that employees can be divided into three types with regard to their level of engagement: the engaged, the not-engaged, and the actively disengaged (see Figure 2 below for definitions). The actively disengaged are the biggest threat to an organization's brand due to the sharing of their discontent with co-workers and the outside world.

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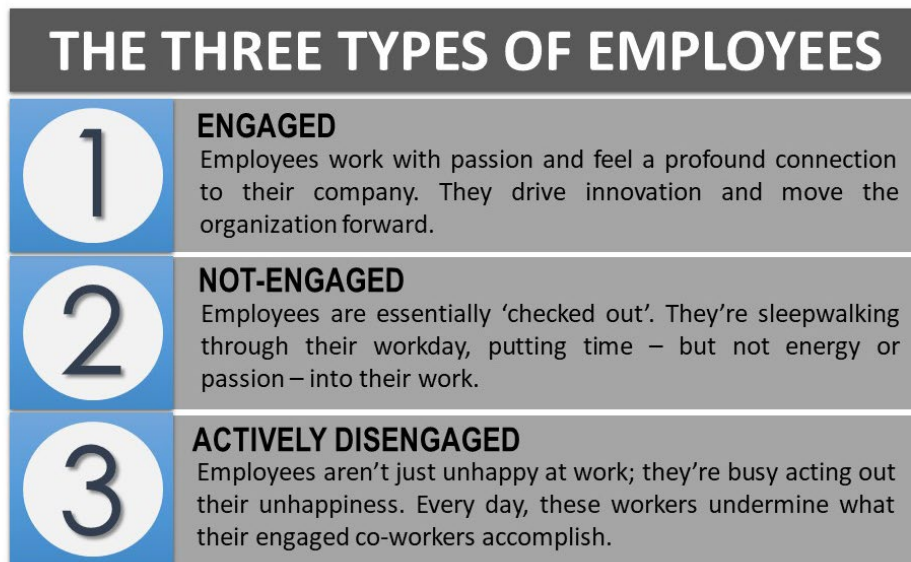
<sup>4</sup> Rick Blizzard, “Engagement vs. Satisfaction Among Hospital Teams”,  
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/10903/engagement-vs-satisfaction-among-hospital-teams.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Kruse, “What Is Employee Engagement”,  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2012/06/22/employee-engagement-what-and-why/#22098ff47f37>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/200108/damage-inflicted-poor-managers.aspx>

The goal of a high performing organization is to move its employees along the spectrum in the hope that all of them will become engaged employees.

Figure 2 - Three types of employees<sup>7</sup>



#### 1.4 Strengthening engagement

Numerous academic studies have explored what drives employee participation. By knowing the three types of employees, organizations can improve employee engagement by developing strategies to move employees along the continuum so that they become fully engaged. Another IES report<sup>8</sup> lists seven key drivers of employee engagement:

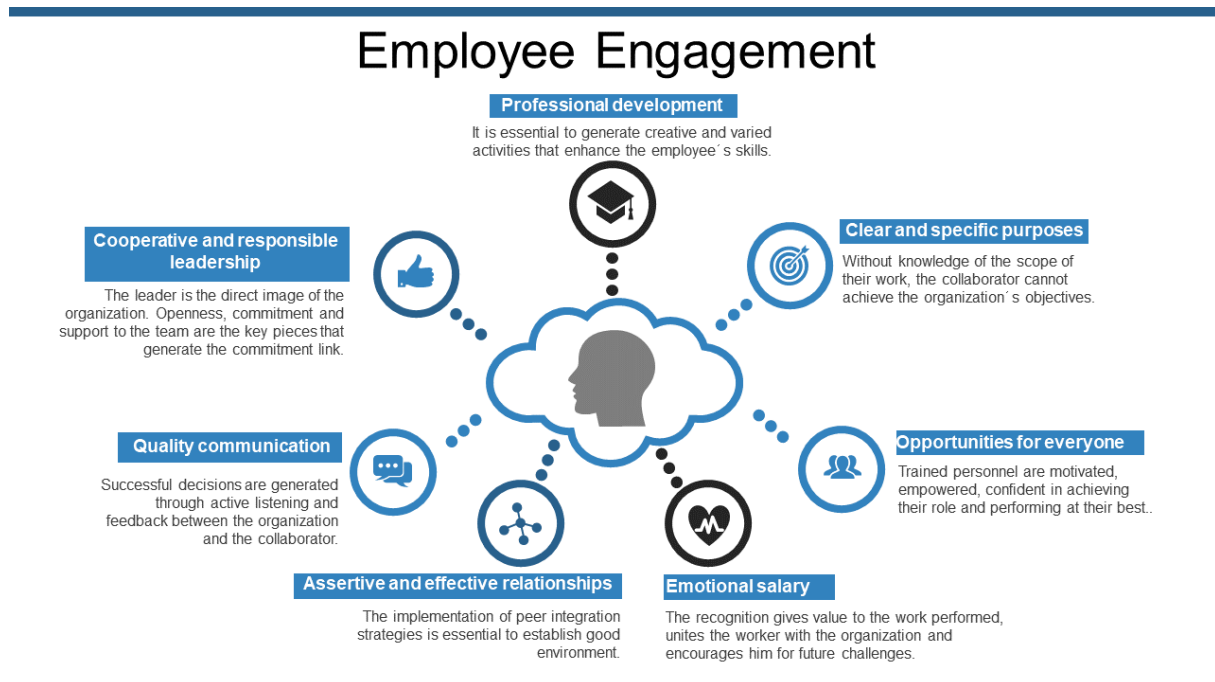
1. Managers listen to employees
2. Employees are involved in decision-making
3. Employer demonstrates concern about employees' health and well-being
4. Senior managers show employees they value them
5. Employees feel able to voice their opinions
6. Good suggestions are acted on
7. Employees have the opportunity to develop their jobs

<sup>7</sup> Gemma Robertson-Smith and Carl Markwick, *Employee Engagement: A review of current thinking*, <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/469.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> D Robinson, S Perryman, S Hayday, *The Drivers of Employee Engagement*, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=17&ved=2ahUKEwiTmPH-x-LIAhUnq1kKHQ-ABj4QFjAQegQIBhAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.employment-studies.co.uk%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fresources%2Ffiles%2F408.pdf&usg=AOvVaw38ceSydVDtzV9XePD9vgdY>



Figure 3 - The engagement model



### 1.5. Measuring engagement

In order to develop an effective employee engagement strategy using the seven key drivers described in Figure 3 above, an organization must have a reference point. To develop this reference point, an organization needs to measure its current state of affairs.

Personnel assessment tools give the project manager and the project team insight into areas of strength and weakness. These tools help project managers assess the team preferences, aspirations, how they process and organize information, how they tend to make decisions, and how they prefer to interact with people (see Chapter 6: Assessment and monitoring for more detailed information on how to conduct employee assessments).

Creating a corporate culture that values its employees through a commitment to strengthening feedback and communication creates added market value and can help establish the national statistical institution as an employer of choice.

### 1.6 Internal communications

Internal communications can be defined as the sharing of information and culture within an organization for business purposes. Though this is not identical to employee engagement, the two concepts are very closely connected. Effective internal communication is one of the primary tools management has to engage meaningfully with staff. We explore the tools used to develop an internal communications strategy in Chapter 2.

### 1.7 Pyramid model

One model of internal communication is built on a simple vertical principle: managers convey information and direction to subordinate employees. The head of the organization has a management board under her or him and communicates with it. The management board has individual department heads under it, the heads of departments have employees under them. In

time-critical crisis situations the pyramid model of communications fulfills its role well. It does not matter if the information is positive or negative. Communication has a clear and formal vertical flow.

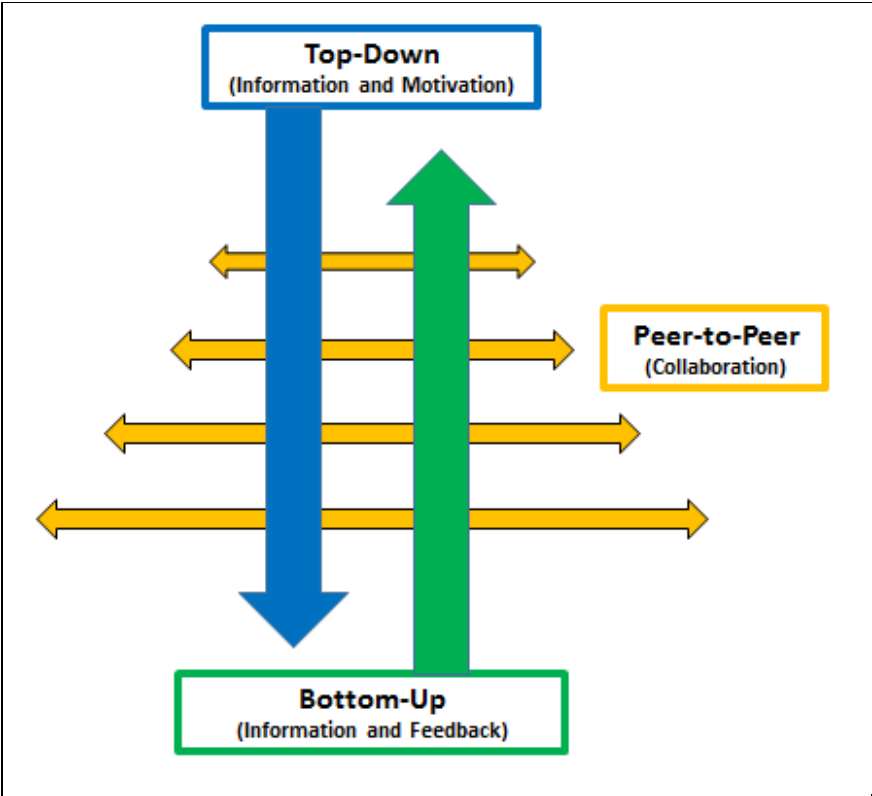
The pyramid model has severe shortcomings, though. Exclusively top-down communications in an organization prevents management from obtaining essential information from staff and, in the medium to long term, demoralizes staff and diminishes employee engagement.

Thus, top-down communication must be accompanied by equally formal and well-structured bottom-up and peer to peer interaction (Figure 4).

**1.8 Bottom-up and horizontal communication**

Well-organized communication in an organization should be as open as possible. The objective in all communications should not only be to convey information, but also to receive information and responses. Each employee, according to their level of responsibility and the confidentiality of certain data, will benefit from receiving as much information as possible. An informed employee who knows the goals and plans of the organization, the current situation, and also understands the environment and common challenges, is much more effective.

**Figure 4 – Internal communications flows**



Bottom-up communication is the vehicle through which employees share their intimate knowledge of the day-to-day operations of an organization with senior management. Bottom-up communication unveils the detailed successes and roadblocks in production processes as well as customer interactions. Bottom-up communication is also the vehicle through which employees react to management proposals, indicating their approval or concerns with new policies, procedures, or strategic decisions so that these issues may be addressed.

Horizontal communication between peers enables collaboration. Horizontal communication inevitably takes place between staff in the same workgroup but may have the most value when structures are in place to promote communication between employees and their peers in different workgroups and occupational specialties. Facilitating broad peer-to-peer communication across all levels of the organization leads, among other things, to effective innovation.

The most important task of internal communication is to ensure that everyone who is associated with the organization receives complete, accurate and reliable information at the right time, and can add their knowledge and understanding to the corporate information flow. Ensuring proper communication within an organization is the simplest and most efficient method to succeed.

All staff, from the most senior executives to the newest recruits, are participants in effective internal communications. See Chapter 5 for the various institutional roles in communications.

### 1.9 Strengthening engagement through communication

The nexus between employee engagement and a robust internal communications program is clear. An effective internal communications strategy must be grounded in the reality of an organization that is genuinely driven by its mission and values. Deloitte's *Becoming irresistible: A new model for employee engagement*<sup>9</sup> has identified five key drivers of employee engagement:

1. Make work meaningful
2. Foster great management
3. Establish a flexible, humane, inclusive workplace
4. Create ample opportunities for growth
5. Establish vision, purpose, and transparency in leadership

The Qualtrics XM Institute Bruce Temkin and Aimee Lucas, *Employee Engagement Competency & Maturity Insight Report 2018*<sup>10</sup> proposes five employee engagement competencies for management:

**Inform** - Provide employees with the information they need to understand what's expected.

**Inspire** - Connect employees to the company's vision and values.

**Instruct** - Provide employees with the knowledge and skills to succeed.

**Involve** - Allow employees to participate in making decisions about how they work.

**Incent** - Deploy appropriate systems to measure, reward, and reinforce desired behaviors.

In order to meet the competencies described by Qualtrics, internal communications must go well beyond simply disseminating information from the top down, to facilitating multi-directional interactions, forging partnerships across silos, building strong relationships deep in the organization, and promoting trust in leadership.

Today's employees need to feel part of the organization and to clearly see and understand how their role contributes to the fulfillment of institutional goals.

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<sup>9</sup> Deloitte Review Issue 16, <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-16/employee-engagement-strategies.html>

<sup>10</sup> Employee Engagement Competency & Maturity Insight Report 2018, <https://www.qualtrics.com/xm-institute/employee-engagement-competency-and-maturity-2018/>

High performing organizations include communication skills in evaluations, track the performance of managers, and publish the results.

Leadership within an organization plays a key role in employee engagement. Some leadership characteristics that foster a favorable working environment and consequently increase employee engagement are:

- Presenting and adhering to organizational values and principles
- Acknowledging achievements
- Supporting talent
- Promoting fairness
- Motivating employees
- Involving employees in new projects
- Respecting diversity
- Having a humanitarian sense
- Listening to employees
- Detecting skills and talents
- Looking for growth opportunities

In summary, leaders must foster a strong and transparent organizational culture that provides employees with a line of sight between their work and the vision, mission and values of the organization. See Chapter 3 for more detailed information on organizational culture, mission, vision and values.

**Chapter 2: Strategic Planning and Tools**

Now that we have explored the theory and concepts, this chapter outlines the main elements and steps for developing a strategic plan for internal communications and employee engagement within statistical organizations. Since no two statistical organizations are exactly the same, these guidelines should be adapted to suit the needs of individual institutions.

Note that strategic planning for internal communications and employee engagement is very similar to strategic planning for external communications. This chapter will draw on the **Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions – Phase I** and highlight primarily those areas in which internal communications planning differs from that of external communications.

In general, strategic planning is a present and future look at an organization and its related environment. It is the process of determining an organization’s long-term goals and then identifying the best approach for achieving those goals.

A high-level flow diagram for strategic planning is shown in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5 – Strategic Planning**



Within the context of internal communications and employee engagement, the stages represented in this diagram break out as follows.

**2.1. Situational analysis**

Situational analysis provides information on the current environment within an organization. This information can then be used to design new communications and engagement objectives and strategies, or to modify existing ones.

The following steps should be considered when conducting situational analysis:

### **Step 1 - Stakeholder identification**

Who are the organization's primary internal stakeholders? For internal communications and employee engagement, stakeholder identification serves the same purpose as audience segmentation does for external communications. A list of key internal stakeholders might include:

- Executives and upper management
- Middle management
- Front-line supervisors
- Subject-matter experts (statisticians, economists, demographers, agronomists, etc.)
- Information technology staff
- Field staff (data collectors)
- Support professionals (budget analysts, human resources specialists, communications experts)
- Clerical staff

What is important in stakeholder identification is not documenting each occupational specialty, but rather sorting organizational levels and domains into groups with common interests in organizational activities, and who might respond to similar outreach or messaging initiatives.

Some questions to consider when engaged in stakeholder identification include:

- What are the members of the employee group interested in?
- What do they value?
- What motivates them?
- What are they skeptical of?
- What are they likely to pay attention to?
- What is common for them to ignore?
- What is credible to them?
- Are there further subgroups with different needs and points of view within the employee group?<sup>11</sup>

### **Step 2 - Stakeholder scanning**

What is the existing relationship between employees and the organization at large?

- Do employees identify with the organization?
- Do they believe in the mission and values?
- Are they even aware of the mission and values?
- Do they trust leadership?
- Do they believe they are being informed of important decisions that affect their work lives?
- Do they feel they have a voice in organizational decision-making?

Some tools for stakeholder scanning include SWOT analysis, focus groups, surveys, and similar methods. Initial stakeholder scanning can be thought of as establishing a baseline. Ongoing assessment and monitoring (Chapter 6) continue this measurement work.

### **Step 3 - Review prior initiatives**

What internal communications campaigns have been effective in the past, and for whom? Have conditions changed so that a similar approach might no longer be as useful, or are some worth repeating?

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<sup>11</sup> *Manual de comunicación interna*, INEGI. This chapter draws on ideas from the INEGI manual in multiple locations.

#### Step 4 - Review existing channels

Evaluate what methods have been used in the past to communicate with staff: organization-wide meetings, posters, newsletters, e-mail, videos, etc. Assess which have been the most effective for various employee groups, who is reading them, and what impact they may have had.

### 2.2 Mission and Vision

Organizational culture as well as mission, vision and values are explored in more detail in Chapter 3. Mission, vision, and values statements are typically not intended only for internal communications and employee engagement. On the contrary, they serve an organization-wide purpose governing all aspects of the statistical enterprise. Nonetheless, mission, vision, and values statements are critical to motivating employees and aligning them with broader institutional objectives.

### 2.3 Goals, objectives and strategies

The terms “goal”, “objective”, and “strategy” are often used interchangeably, or to mean different levels of abstraction. For the purpose of this section:

- A goal is a broad primary outcome
- An objective is the approach you take to achieve a goal
- A strategy is a concrete step you take to achieve an objective

At the highest level of abstraction, goals define broad communication priorities that support the overall mission of the organization.

When defining goals, it is helpful to start with the organizational outcomes or business needs the internal communications plan is intended to support. The question to ask is “What will be different in the organization as a whole when we have successfully achieved our plans?”

Internal communications goals flow from these business needs. The question to ask is “What role can communications play to help achieve the organizational outcomes we desire?”

An example matrix of business needs and communications goals is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Business needs and communications goals**

<b>Business need</b>	<b>Internal communications goal</b>
Improve customer service	Enhance employee engagement
Ensure risks are identified and problems caught early	Build a culture of open communication
Measure an ever-changing economy	Encourage innovation and creativity
Change institutional governance structures	Facilitate the adoption of new processes and compliance with new policies

Objectives break goals down into actionable components. They identify separate initiatives that, together, fulfil the goals.

A central component of developing objectives is composing key messages. A clear, concise, and effective message platform is the cornerstone of any successful communications program.

Key messages are the most explicit tool an organization has to shape and reinforce its brand. In the context of internal communications within a statistical organization, key messages must provide a narrative framework that expresses what the organization does, what principles lie underneath that work, what value the organization brings to its employees, and – perhaps most important in this

setting – how employees contribute to the success of the organization. Effective messages must be concise, relevant to the audience, compelling, and memorable<sup>12</sup>. Internal key messages must also be credible to their audience, which, in this case, is highly knowledgeable and discriminating.

Key messages become the source of all further communication activities. Internal messaging must also be compatible with external messaging, since employees consume both.

In addition to key messages, statistical organizations must develop a consistent approach to conveying these messages. Together, the messages and their delivery comprise a message platform. This is one of the activities that takes place during strategy creation.

Strategies are concrete action steps or tasks an organization takes to achieve an objective. Strategies need to be SMART:

- **Specific** – what are we going to do for whom?
- **Measurable** – is it quantifiable and can we measure it?
- **Attainable** – can we get it done within the time frame and with the resources we have?
- **Relevant** – will this strategy have an effect on the desired objective?
- **Time bound** – when will this be accomplished?

Strategy development targets actions to specific audiences or stakeholder groups. Some questions to address when determining target audiences include:

- How will a proposed communication address the interests and concerns of this audience?
- What does the team want this audience to do, think, feel, or believe as a result of the communication?
- What are the most important points the audience should retain?
- What level and frequency of communication is needed?
- What kinds of media does this audience consume at work?
- Whose messages will this audience pay attention to?
- Will support from any audience member be required to communicate the message?
- Are there constraints of geography, time zones, work shifts, culture, or technology that need to be addressed for this audience?

Any given key message and surrounding communication can likely be delivered through multiple media or channels. These might include:

- Organization-wide meetings (potentially streamed to regional locations)
- Work group meetings
- E-mail
- Intranet
- Wiki
- Newsletters
- Posters
- Videos

Channel selection should be based upon the media which are most suitable for any given communication priority. Each channel offers specific advantages and drawbacks, and not every channel will be fit for purpose. Some strategies will benefit from using multiple, mutually reinforcing

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<sup>12</sup> Levi and Kindelan, “Developing, delivering, and evaluating key messages: A case study from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics”, UNECE Workshop on Statistical Dissemination and Communication, June 2019.



channels and higher message repetition. An effective content strategy maps out the right mix of channels to reach the identified audiences.

Note that, since effective internal communications is not exclusively a top-down activity through which leadership conveys information to subordinates, care should be taken to facilitate bottom-up and peer-to-peer interaction. This might include leaving ample time for question and answer sessions at all meetings, an electronic mailbox for employee comments and suggestions, a facility for employee-posted content on the organization's intranet or wiki, etc. To be credible in the long term, employee feedback must be taken seriously and integrated into organizational planning.

A communications calendar can be useful for planning several products in combination.

## **2.4 Performance measures**

All communication activities should be measured and evaluated to assess whether they achieve the communication objectives and strategies. Done effectively, measurement enables iterative progress in communications planning. It presents opportunities for continuous improvement and helps organizations develop an understanding of the impact of communications activities.

Baseline research conducted during the situational analysis phase is central to understanding audiences' priorities and values. Evaluation throughout implementation is central to understanding whether the audiences' priorities and values have changed, that is, whether the communications activities are making a difference.

Since situations change over time, objectives and strategies may need to change as well. Properly planned and executed, performance measurement and evaluation can help an organization identify unexpected events, opportunities and threats that affect its work, and make adjustments in time to take advantage of critical moments.

Performance measures, assessment, and monitoring are treated in more detail in chapter 6.

## **2.5 Action plan**

The action plan pulls everything together into a single document with the background (situational analysis, mission, and vision), the overall strategic direction (goals), intermediate actionable components (objectives), and detailed implementation steps (strategies), all bound together with measurement and evaluation indicators.

## Chapter 3: Organizational culture and its mission, vision and values

This chapter explores organizational culture and provides an example of how to define and change it. It also defines mission, vision and values, provides examples of how to develop each element and demonstrates the importance to organizational identity and employee engagement.

This chapter complements the work undertaken by the Developing Organizational Resilience Working Group, which gathered examples of mission, vision, values and Target Operating Models from several national statistical organizations.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.1 Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behavior. It can simply be viewed as “the way we do things”. It includes an organization’s expectations, experiences, philosophy, vision, customs, values, norms, beliefs, and habits - written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time. It also defines behavior, such as what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within an organization.

Organizational culture directly influences the behaviors of employees within the organization, how they identify with the organization as well as interactions with clients. It changes over time. In fact, culture must evolve for an organization to stay relevant in a changing world.

When properly defined and aligned, culture can guide employees towards a shared purpose and improve an organization’s capacity to excel. Defining statements, such as mission, vision and core value statements, help employees of organizations understand their organization and what is expected.

#### 3.1.1 Defining Organizational Culture

Before an organization can understand its own culture, it is helpful to dig further into organizational culture. What are its attributes? How can it be explained or defined?

Groysberg et al.<sup>14</sup> note that there are many formal definitions of organizational culture and a variety of models and methods for assessing it, but agreement is sparse. They identified four generally accepted attributes:

**Shared:** Culture is a group phenomenon - it does not exist at an individual level. It lives in shared behaviors and values. It is most commonly experienced through the norms and expectations of a group - especially the unwritten rules.

**Pervasive:** Culture can be found everywhere in an organization; sometimes it is part of the organizational identity. It can be seen in collective behaviors, physical environments, visible symbols, stories, and legends. Other aspects of culture are less visible, including mindsets and motivations.

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<sup>13</sup><https://statswiki.unece.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=218890322&preview=/218890322/219676821/NSI%20TOMs%20v2.docx>

<sup>14</sup> Groysberg, Boris, Jeremiah Lee, Jesse Price and J.Yo-Jud Cheng. Harvard Business Review Spotlight – Leading Culture. January-February, 2018.

**Enduring:** The type of culture in an organization can last for a long period of time. Lengthy existence can be explained partially by the attraction-selection-attrition model, i.e. people are drawn to organizations with characteristics they find appealing; organizations are more likely to select individuals who seem to “fit in”; and over time those who don’t fit in tend to leave. It becomes self-reinforcing and also more difficult to change.

**Implicit:** Culture is subliminal in nature as people instinctively recognize and respond to it - it acts as a kind of “silent language”.

### 3.1.2 Culture Styles

Before an organization can change its culture, it must understand its existing culture and know where it wants to be. In an article published in Harvard Business Review, Groysberg et al. determined two primary dimensions that apply regardless of organization type, size, industry, geography, etc. Analyzing where the organization fits into the two dimensions is essential for understanding the culture of an organization.

The two primary dimensions are:

#### 1. People Interactions

An organization’s orientation toward people interactions falls upon a range of highly **independent** to highly **interdependent**.

- Independent cultures place value on autonomy, individual action and competition.
- Interdependent cultures emphasize integration, managing relationships and coordinating group effort. People in such cultures tend to collaborate and to see success through the lens of the group.

#### 2. Response to Change

There are two responses to change: flexibility and stability.

- Stability includes focusing on predictability and the maintenance of the status quo.
- Flexibility is about adaptability and an openness to change.

Organizations that favor stability tend to follow rules, are hierarchical and strive for efficiency, whereas flexible organizations typically prioritize innovation and openness.

### 3.1.3 Eight types of organizational culture

In addition to the above dimensions, eight styles apply to both organizational cultures and individual leaders.

1. **Caring** focuses on relationships and mutual trust. Work environments are warm, collaborative, and welcoming places where people help and support one another. Employees are united by loyalty; leaders emphasize sincerity, teamwork, and positive relationships.
2. **Purpose** is exemplified by idealism and altruism. Work environments are tolerant, compassionate places where people try to do good for the long-term future of the world. Employees are united by a focus on sustainability and global communities; leaders emphasize shared ideals and contribute to a greater cause.
3. **Learning** is characterized by exploration, expansiveness, and creativity. Work environments are inventive and open-minded places where people spark new ideas and explore alternatives. Employees are united by curiosity; leaders emphasize innovation, knowledge, and adventure.
4. **Enjoyment** is expressed through fun and excitement. Work environments are lighthearted places where people tend to do what makes them happy. Employees are united by playfulness and stimulation; leaders emphasize spontaneity and a sense of humor.

5. **Results** is characterized by achievement and winning. Work environments are outcome-oriented and merit-based places where people aspire to achieve top performance. Employees are united by a drive for capability and success; leaders emphasize goal accomplishment.
6. **Authority** is defined by strength, decisiveness, and boldness. Work environments are competitive places where people strive to gain personal advantage. Employees are united by strong control; leaders emphasize confidence and dominance.
7. **Safety** is defined by planning, caution, and preparedness. Work environments are predictable places where people are risk-conscious and think things through carefully. Employees are united by a desire to feel protected and anticipate change; leaders emphasize being realistic and planning ahead.
8. **Order** is focused on respect, structure, and shared norms. Work environments are methodical places where people tend to play by the rules and want to fit in. Employees are united by cooperation; leaders emphasize shared procedures and time-honored customs.

### 3.1.4 Integrated Culture Framework

With these eight styles and two dimensions, Groysberg et al. created the *Integrated Culture Framework*. Essentially, it illustrates the degree to which the eight styles fit into the independence or interdependence (people interactions) and flexibility or stability (response to change) spectrums. (See Figure 6).

**Figure 6 - Integrated culture framework**



The spatial relationships are important. Proximate styles, such as *safety* and *order*, or *learning* and *enjoyment*, will coexist more easily than styles that are far apart on the chart, such as *authority* and *purpose*, or *safety* and *learning*.

Some dimensions and styles work better together than others. Organizations that are shown to be about *results* and *caring*, for example, may be confusing for employees (should they work individually to meet all targets or work as a team and emphasize collaboration and shared success?).

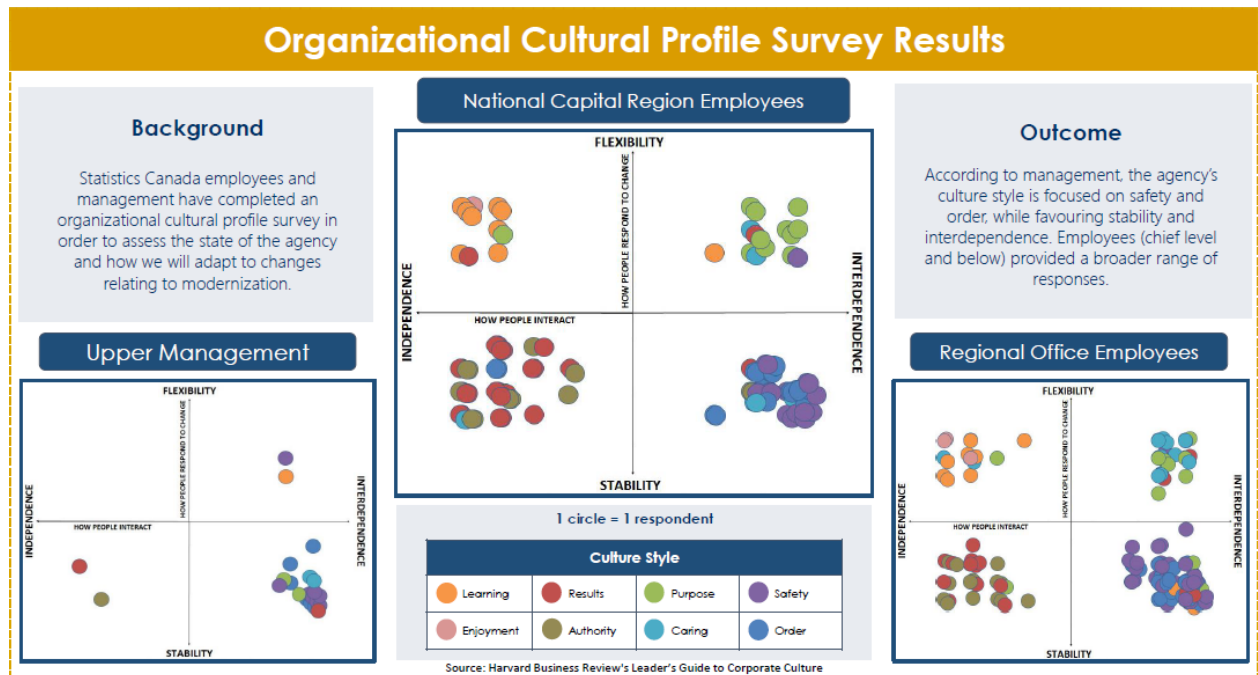
In contrast, a culture that emphasizes *caring* and *order* encourages teamwork, trust, and respect. These two styles are mutually reinforcing, which can lead to strong loyalty, limited conflict, and high levels of engagement, but this can also lead towards groupthink, reliance on consensus-based decisions, avoidance of conflict, and a sense of “us versus them”.

It is important to stress that each dimension and style has advantages and disadvantages, and no dimension or style is inherently better than another.

A survey tool could be used to help organizations determine their organizational culture (see Case study 1)

**Case study 1: Culture analysis at Statistics Canada**

A survey tool, developed by Groysberg *et al.*, is available to help organizations determine their cultural make-up. Statistics Canada used this tool as part of its vision statement exercise.



### Organizational Cultural Profile Framework

Culture Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Caring</b> Warm, sincere, relational	Improved teamwork, engagement, communication, trust and sense of belonging	Overemphasis on consensus-building may reduce exploration of options, stifle competitiveness and slow decision-making
<b>Purpose</b> Purpose driven, idealistic, tolerant	Improved appreciation for diversity, sustainability and social responsibility	Overemphasis on a long-term purpose and ideals may get in the way of practical and immediate concerns
<b>Learning</b> Open, inventive, exploring	Improved innovation, agility and organizational learning	Overemphasis on exploration may lead to a lack of focus and an inability to exploit existing advantages
<b>Enjoyment</b> Playful, instinctive, fun loving	Improved employee morale, engagement and creativity	Overemphasis on autonomy and engagement may lead to a lack of discipline and create possible compliance or governance issues
<b>Results</b> Achievement driven, goal focused	Improved execution, external focus, capability building and goal achievement	Overemphasis on achieving results may lead to communication and collaboration breakdowns and higher levels of stress and anxiety
<b>Authority</b> Bold, decisive, dominant	Improved speed of decision-making and responsiveness to threats or crises	Overemphasis on strong authority and bold decision-making may lead to politics, conflict and a psychologically unsafe work environment
<b>Safety</b> Realistic, careful, prepared	Improved risk management, stability and business continuity	Overemphasis on standardization and formalization may lead to bureaucracy, inflexibility and dehumanization of the work environment
<b>Order</b> Rule abiding, respectful, cooperative	Improved operational efficiency, reduced conflict and greater civic-mindedness	Overemphasis on rules and traditions may reduce individualism, stifle creativity and limit organizational agility

Source: Harvard Business Review's Leader's Guide to Corporate Culture

### 3.2 Changing an Organizational Culture

There are a number of approaches for changing or evolving organizational culture. Given the social and often emotional nature of culture change, careful thinking and planning about culture change is important.

Cummings & Worley (2004) proposed six guidelines for culture change that could help an organization adjust to a new culture:

- Formulate a clear strategic vision
- Display top-management commitment.
- Model culture change at the highest level
- Modify the organization to support institutional change
- Select and socialize newcomers
- Develop ethical and legal sensitivity

Groysberg *et al.* called their approach “four levers for evolving culture change.” Although there are some similarities with Cummings and Worley, the approach of Groysberg *et al.* is more about recommended practices for evolving culture:

1. **Articulate the aspiration**

Much like defining a new strategy, creating a new culture should begin with an analysis of the current one, using a framework that can be openly discussed throughout the organization.

2. **Select and develop leaders who align with the target culture**

Leaders serve as important drivers for change by encouraging it at all levels and creating a safe climate. However, culture change can and does lead to turnover; some employees will move on because they feel they are no longer a good fit while others are asked to leave.

3. **Use organizational conversations about culture to underscore the importance of change**

Explicit communication at all levels is required for smoother transitions. The options are endless, including organization-wide meetings, presentations, social media, etc. The important fact is that they occur. The integrated culture framework and survey tool referred to above can be used to discuss current and desired culture styles and also differences within an organization. (See Text Box examples).

4. **Reinforce the desired change through organizational design**

An organization’s structure and activities need to be aligned to support the aspirations of a new culture. This can involve renaming and reorganizing the structure or providing specific training. For example, at Statistics Canada, culture change included the creation of new ‘modernization’ teams and pathfinder projects.

Organizational performance can be improved through culture change. Tools such as the framework above can be simple, but powerful. Senior management must be aware of their organization’s existing culture, define a target, and then move towards it. Culture is often seen as a fundamental management tool.

### 3.3 Mission, vision and value statements

As we saw in Chapter 2, mission, vision, and value statements are often part of the strategic planning process that statistical organizations use to describe their present situation and future goals. These statements can become an important tool for understanding an organization’s existing culture, and what kind of culture it would like to have. They are also useful tools for consulting or educating employees about organizational culture.

These statements let the employees, and the citizens they serve, know:

- the purpose of the statistical organization (current state)
- where the organization wants to be (e.g., future state)
- its values or what it stands for

All statements should be inspiring and developed with input from employees. By creating clear, meaningful and reflective statements, management can communicate their objectives and motivate their employees. This will ensure employees understand the organizational objectives, make consistent or coherent decisions and are engaged in organizational changes.

To be most effective, mission, vision, and values statements must be repeated many times. It can be good practice to integrate these statements as standard elements into most, or all, internal communications vehicles.

An increased sense of employee pride may occur when employees see themselves working as part of an organization that stands for something and is united by a common sense of purpose.

Mission, vision, and values statements are also useful for communicating the “who, what and why” for the external users of the statistical organization’s data products and services.

### 3.3.1 Difference between vision and mission statements

A **mission statement** is about the present, whereas the **vision statement** is about the future. A mission statement describes the organizational purpose and objectives including the quality of its products and services, whereas a vision statement is used to inspire employees to help achieve organizational goals.

### 3.3.2 Mission Statement

At the core of a mission statement is the reason why the statistical organization exists and **what it actually does** at present. The statement should be short, interesting, and easy to remember. Using jargon or technical wording is not advised. Mission statements generally outline priority activities, but also the importance and uniqueness of the agency (i.e. what makes the organization stand out compared to others).

The mission statement should be developed with an outsider’s perspective in mind, taking account of what will interest and connect with those outside the organization as well as any benefits that may accrue to them, but with full consultation and engagement of employees.

### How to create a mission statement

Campell and Yeung<sup>15</sup> conducted a two-year research project with 53 large, successful companies in the early 1990s in order to devise a meaningful mission structure. They created a framework known as the Ashridge Mission Model<sup>16</sup> (see Figure 7 below).

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<sup>15</sup> Need to add reference

<sup>16</sup> [https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Campbell%27s\\_Ashridge\\_Mission\\_Model](https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Campbell%27s_Ashridge_Mission_Model)

The framework consists of four important mission statement dimensions:

### 1. Purpose

What is the organization for? For whose benefit is all the effort being invested?

### 2. Strategy

To achieve its purpose the organization needs a strategy. If the purpose is to be the best, there must be a strategy explaining the principles around which the company will become the best.

### 3. Values

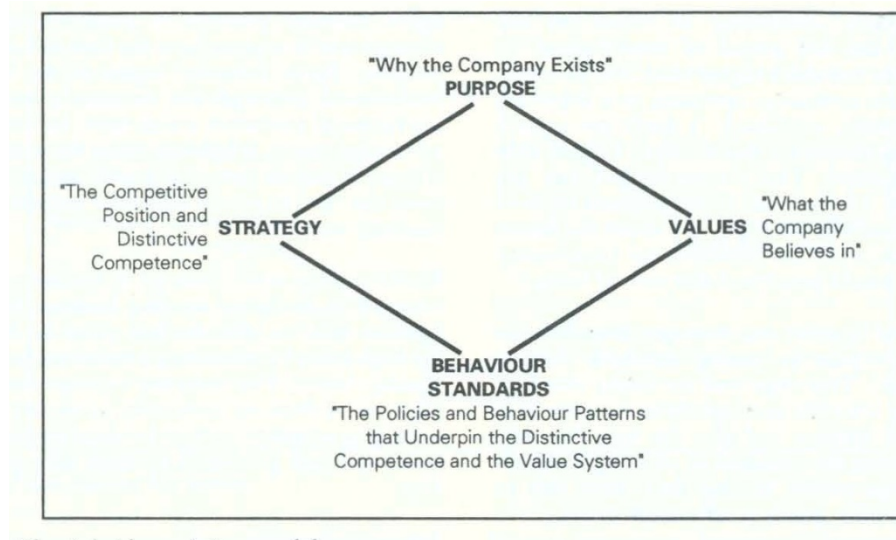
To capture the emotional energy of an organization, the mission needs to provide some philosophical or moral rationale for behavior.

### 4. Behavioral standards

Values are the beliefs and moral principles that lie behind the organization's culture. Values give meaning to the norms and behavioral standards in the organization.

Values and behavioral standards explain the organization's culture. An organizational mission statement is effective when all the four elements of mission reinforce each other.

**Figure 7 - The Ashridge Mission Model**



### Case study 2: Creating a mission statement at Statistics Canada

In September and October 2012, the Communications Branch held group discussions with Statistics Canada employees to obtain feedback and direction on the development of a mission statement for the agency. Group discussions were conducted where employees evaluated mission statements from four other countries, discussed their essential components, and wrote a mission statement of their own.



Based on the consultation results, employees determined that Statistics Canada's mission statement should:

- explain the Agency's role in Canadian society
- describe its products and services
- reflect its principles and values

In terms of style, employees suggested that the statement should be strong, inspirational, clear, and concise. The top three mission statements selected by the focus groups were submitted to senior management, who ultimately approved the following:

***Serving Canada with high-quality statistical information that matters.***

The mission statement was promoted through internal and external messaging, plaques, etc.

### 3.3.3 Vision Statements

Vision statements are carefully worded in order to inspire or motivate **employees**. They are used to describe what the organization aspires to be. They make use of the guiding beliefs of the organization to remind their audience of the values that have to be followed.

A vision statement can and should help drive the decisions and goals of an organization. Examples of powerful visions include:

- **Disney:** To make people happy
- **IKEA:** To create a better everyday life for the many
- **Oxfam:** A world without poverty

Why should organizations spend time on defining their vision? Research indicates that more engaged employees are more productive, and they are more effective corporate ambassadors in the larger community. Employees who find their company's vision meaningful have engagement levels of 68%, which is 18 points above average (Fernandes, 2019).

When creating a vision statement, the following questions should be considered:

- What ultimate impact do I want my brand to have?
- In what way will my brand interact with clients/citizens?
- What will the culture of my organization look like, and how will that play out in employees' lives? (Fernandes, 2019).

The answers to these questions will help articulate the direction the organization would like to follow, its journey between the organization's present and its future state—in other words: its vision. Based on the information from the questions, consider the following when finalizing the text of the vision statement:

- Project 5 to 10 years in the future
- Dream big and focus on success
- Use the present tense
- Use clear, concise, jargon-free language
- Infuse it with passion and make it inspiring
- Align it with your business values and goals
- Have a plan to communicate your vision statement to your employees
- Be prepared to commit time and resources to the vision you establish (Fernandes, 2019).

### Case study 3: The Development of a Vision Statement at Statistics Canada

In the spring of 2018, Statistics Canada held organization-wide ('town hall') sessions with employees to discuss the development of a vision statement. Given that the organization had launched a modernization initiative, the activity also provided feedback on the status of the modernization journey in the eyes of the employees. The resulting analysis and discussion led to the adoption of a new vision statement: ***Delivering insight through data, for a better Canada.***



### 3.3.4 Value statements

An organization's values are its guiding principles that apply across the organization and support how its work is carried out. They are the organization's basic beliefs about what really matters, which

guide how things should be done. Values are what supports the vision, shape the culture, and reflect what is important to the organization.

Core values should be limited to about five, so as to be easy to understand and communicate. For example, Facebook has five organizational values: Be Bold; Focus on Impact; Move Fast; Be Open; Build Social Value.

**Case study 4: The identification of Statistics Canada’s core values**

In the fall of 2019, Statistics Canada outlined its four core values. In its extensive internal communications, the agency noted “Organizational culture is as diverse as culture itself. There isn’t a single rubric for the perfect set of values—every organization is different. And yet, culture impacts everything. That’s why over the past few years, culture has come up as an equally important piece of modernization, and why the agency is building on its strong foundation by introducing four core values to help guide you—our 5,000 or so employees—throughout our modernization journey.”.

The images below outline the four values, and the activities created for employee engagement and enjoyment.

**Our core values**



**Curious and always learning:** We have a “growth mentality,”

promoting curiosity and everyday learning. We embrace new ideas, innovation, flexibility and collaboration.



**Trustworthy:** We place a high value on our reputation as credible,

trustworthy and neutral. We act as trusted data stewards who take pride and ownership in safeguarding our data assets. Together, we are committed to upholding security, privacy, confidentiality and integrity.



**Caring and inclusive:** We show understanding, care and

compassion for our most prized asset—our employees. We apply a diverse and inclusive lens in all aspects of our work, and we promote mental health and workplace wellness; accessibility; and, diversity and inclusion.



**Purposeful:** We are results-driven and focused on providing

tangible outcomes for Canadians. We are committed to delivering services that are user-centric, timely and of high quality.

**Stay tuned for culture activities**

Explore this section to find activities for each core value.

**Curious and always learning:** *Your best asset in front of a challenge is your attitude.*

- A Learning Week
- Meet Modern Thinkers speaker series
- Internal speaker series on taking risks wisely
- “How to” learning sessions
- Innovation Fair

**Caring and inclusive:** *Never underestimate the power of kindness.*

- Pop-up messages on workstations
- Kudos walls
- “Secret Friend” week
- Video on the importance of small gestures

**Trustworthy:** *Trust is the basis of every good relationship, be it with clients, stakeholders, the public, or each other.*

- Culture framework passports
- Modern and flexible workplace videos
- Awards and recognitions for best culture transformations

**Purposeful:** *What you do truly matters because your work improves the lives of Canadians.*

- Faces of StatCan videos
- Show and tell sessions on projects that have had positive impacts on the lives of Canadians
- Good Deeds Wall

### **3.3.5 How to make defining culture and mission, vision, and value statements useful?**

When defining or redefining organizational culture, or creating mission, vision, and value statements, it is important to involve employees often. This will strengthen employee engagement towards the organization and they will then take ownership.

Organizational culture definitions, as well as mission, vision and values statements, are meant to be a roadmap for an organization not to lock an organization into an unchanging pathway. They need to be reviewed from time to time to confirm that the organization continues to live its mission and move towards its vision, while applying its values. As noted earlier, these statements should evolve over time. In essence, the vision statement becomes the mission statement once it has been accomplished.

The more clearly an organization outlines high-level goals from the beginning, the less time and resources it will need to remedy poor communication, alignment, employee engagement and unwanted cultural behaviors at a later point in time.

When done correctly, culture, along with the defining mission, vision and core value statements, are puzzle pieces of the organization. To ensure the picture is whole requires a clear and specific organizational understanding and definition of each of these elements—and how the pieces fit together.

## Chapter 4: Maturity model

This chapter presents an example of a maturity model - a diagnostic tool for assessing an organization's proficiency in a particular area. Though such an evaluation can be carried out by external experts in the field (typically consultants), maturity models are just as often used in self-assessment exercises.

The **Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model** (Figure 8 below) is intended to be:

1. **Descriptive:** As a mechanism to help statistical organizations understand their current capabilities with respect to the most important characteristics of internal communications and employee engagement.
2. **Aspirational:** As an indicator of potential next steps in organizational development, providing guidelines for improvement.

Note that every assessment using a maturity model will require an element of subjective judgement. The intention behind the model is not to generate an empirically validated, statistically sound "score", but rather to give management and other participants an objective sense of organizational capacity, using a tool-based process that can be repeated over time to evaluate progress or lack thereof.

### What happens after the maturity assessment?

#### 1. Structure the problem

It is uncommon for an organization to display the same level of maturity across all characteristics. One of the most valuable results of using a maturity model is recognizing that a high-level structure exists and seeing how the different characteristics fit into a larger equation. This helps to frame a broader discussion and begins to focus the right questions.

#### 2. Determine desired level of maturity for each characteristic

Does an organization need to be 'proficient' in all characteristics? Maybe, but maybe not, at least not in the short term. Getting to the highest level of maturity rapidly can be expensive in terms of both financial and human resources. The cost of improvements in internal communications and employee engagement will need to be balanced with other organizational priorities. The maturity model can help identify areas where the most improvement can be achieved with realistic resource allocations.

#### 3. Identify and prioritize opportunities for organizational growth

Maturity models are often the first step in a larger opportunity identification process. Based on the desired level of maturity in each characteristic, an organization can set measurable short, medium and long-term goals for improvement.

#### 4. Develop a strategic internal communications and employee engagement plan.

(For a detailed description of strategic planning, see Chapter 2).

**Figure 8 - Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Little or scattered management awareness of, or support for, internal communications and employee engagement.	Explicit promotion of internal communications and employee engagement by top management. Value and priority communicated to middle and front-line managers.	All levels of management committed to effective internal communications and employee engagement.
<b>Management</b>	Internal communications are ad hoc, according to manager preference	Internal communications are routine but mass-market (e-mail, newsletters, intranet, formal meetings)	Internal communications are frequent, direct, conversational, tailored to individuals or small groups
<b>Staff</b>	Communication is ad hoc, no mechanisms are in place for staff feedback or participation	Staff are consulted on visioning, work processes	Staff actively participate in visioning, determining work processes
<b>Information flow</b>	Ad hoc, top down	Routine, bi-directional (top down and bottom-up)	Routine, multi-directional (top down, bottom up, peer-to-peer at all levels)
<b>Planning</b>	Ad-hoc	Tactical, event or project focused	Strategic, coordinated organization-wide
<b>Metrics and Evaluation</b>	Few or none	Assessment once per year or less frequently. Results are shared among top management for information purposes. Little or no coordinated response.	Assessment at least once per year. Results are compared to benchmarks and established organizational key performance indicator goals. Results shared among management for coordinated action.
<b>Resources</b>	Tasks are assigned piecemeal to (possibly multiple) existing units, no additional staff, no professional specialization or designated budget	Tasks are assigned to a single designated existing unit, little professional specialization, some designated budget	Tasks are assigned to a specialized independent unit with professional expertise, adequate ongoing budget
<b>Organizational Alignment</b>	Staff identifies primarily with their own narrow work unit	Staff identifies with their own work unit and general organizational values	Staff identifies with organizational goals, are willing to cooperate across work units to achieve results
<b>Training</b>	Ad hoc, according to individual preferences	“Soft skills” training for all levels of management	Coaching for management; coaching, team building, facilitation, career development, etc. training for staff
<b>Performance management</b>	Communications and employee engagement are not incorporated into performance plans or reviews	Communications and employee engagement are a standard element in management performance plans and reviews	Standard procedures are in place organization-wide to recognize superior staff performance aligned with organizational goals

**Chapter 5: The roles in communication**

In this chapter we explore the various roles in communications activities across the statistical institution.

Strong internal structures consisting of a well-motivated and effective team of key players in the organization can only be created through planned and thoughtful communication. Any information circulating within the institution must be associated with clear lines of responsibility and regulated by internal procedures.

The internal communication strategy distributes the responsibilities among identified roles. Each role carries its own responsibilities and accountabilities. The allocation of the roles and responsibilities promotes a culture of cooperation.

As we have seen in previous chapters, activities or responsibilities of internal communications are many. They include: planning and executing effective internal communications (e.g. measuring employee views and acting on such feedback, sharing information more widely, and ensuring senior management visibility); protecting and championing the desired corporate culture; empowering employees (e.g. encouraging self-managed teams, monitoring and continuously improving measurement assessment, reward and recognition systems); and enhancing internal relationships and learning (e.g. establishing internal support networks, encouraging employees to talk to managers and recognizing examples of successful practice).<sup>17</sup>

Table 2 describes the roles of key players considered in the development of the communication strategy.

**Table 2. Key roles and related communications activities**

<b>Roles: Person/group responsible</b>	<b>Communication activity</b>
Chief Executive (Chief Statistician, President, Director General)	Champion the organization’s internal communication activities; communicate information relating to strategic objectives, directions, and policies
Communications	Communication of operational issues, building tools, functionality, events, messages; identification of internal communication gaps; development and implementation of communication plans, receiving and channeling feedback from employees
Human Resources	Communicate management decisions to staff; receive and channel feedback from employees
Managers/senior leaders	Communicate management decisions to staff; receive staff feedback and concerns
Employees	Provide feedback and communicate staff issues

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<sup>17</sup> John M. Dalton and Susan Croft, *Managing Corporate Reputation: A Specially Commissioned Report*, Thorogood, 2003

### **5.3 Role of the Chief Executive (Chief Statistician/President/ Director General)**

Executive leaders, particularly Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), play a unique organizational role. As the top leader of the organization, the CEO influences organizational direction, relations with key stakeholders and organizational effectiveness by establishing a collective purpose, communicating a vision, and managing the culture. That role directly influences employee perceptions, attitudes, and performance through leadership and power.

### **5.4 Role of communications department**

An internal communications department, whether it is responsible for strategic, internal, external or all forms of communications, has many functions. For the purpose of this document, the responsibilities for internal communications include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Creating and implementing a communications plan, in conjunction with other departments;
- Distributing and explaining policy changes to employees, streamlining the communications process, providing education and training, and addressing the problem of information overload;
- Overseeing internal announcements and training;
- Managing internal websites and social media, including working with website developers, posting regular social media updates and engaging with employees on social media channels;
- Managing blogs, including creating a relevant editorial calendar, writing articles and working with people to create content;
- Holding events, such as continuing education opportunities, networking mixers or open houses;
- Creating and distributing internal information materials, including brochures, newsletters and mailers; and
- Participating in issues and crisis management.

All of these functions help to strengthen the organization, brand and marketing efforts.

Effective communication is a vital part of developing transparency in organizations, especially in the wider context of political and economic uncertainty. Clear and consistent internal messaging is also needed as the nature of organizations and their workforces continues to change, driven by factors such as technology. As we explained earlier, good employee communication will help staff understand their organization's purpose and strategy, identify with the organization's values, and develop a sense of belonging by understanding how their role contributes to the wider purpose. Employees are more likely to contribute more and feel committed if there is a culture of open communication.

### **5.5 Role of Human Resources**

People are the core of an organization, and Human Resources (HR) is the institutional bridge connecting employees to their workplace. HR may be responsible for communications related to employee training, benefits, wages and procedures. A close collaboration between HR and internal communications tends to strengthen an organization and is one of the primary bulwarks protecting employees from receiving mixed and possibly conflicting messages.

The HR and communications team should offer employees first-hand, accurate, and reliable information about wages and benefits, organizational policies and rules, company news, and other important HR issues. Without trust, employees may believe incorrect information or rumors.



## **5.6 Role of managers/ senior leaders**

In internal communication, it is worth remembering and visualizing the role of the managers responsible for the functioning of departments. Line managers play a vital role as cogs in a well-oiled internal communications machine. Recognizing the value of their contribution, and investing more in developing management communication potential, is an area that deserves more attention.

There is a responsibility for line managers to ensure that all employees have an opportunity to participate in regular team/staff meetings. There is a responsibility upon each employee to attend and participate in these meetings. Employees should have the opportunity to respond and provide feedback. Managers will in turn convey this information to senior management where appropriate.

A successful communication strategy depends on the full support of senior leaders. Rather than being a 'top down' exercise, there needs to be two-way and multi-directional dialogue, so that people have meaningful opportunities to feed their views upwards and discuss them with colleagues. This is central to developing more effective and agile organizations, through innovation and responding to operational issues.

## **5.7 Role of employees**

Given an efficient flow of information, both relevant and timely, employees will better understand the statistical institution's rules of operation and its priorities and responsibilities for future implementation. Through well-developed internal communication, employees can be prepared for any changes and can closely identify with the organization. Employees who know what is going on, what activities are planned, and who will be responsible for what, feel respected. Their approach to their tasks is then much more robust.

Employees have a crucial role to play in ensuring effective communication internally and externally. It is each employee's responsibility to:

- communicate effectively
- be mindful that communication is a two-way process and to ensure that appropriate information is shared and understood
- promote a positive corporate image at all times
- act professionally, with courtesy and regard for service users
- not act in a manner which could bring the organization's reputation into disrepute

## Chapter 6: Assessment and monitoring

Regular measurement and assessment of internal communications enables a statistical organization to analyze a variety of trends:

- Demonstrate the value of communication interventions
- Determine how and to what extent communications activities and products are making a difference for the targeted audiences
- Increase the skill and expertise of the organization’s communication staff through continuous learning
- Inform decision-making about future communications initiatives and outreach

Perhaps most importantly, measurement, assessment and monitoring can provide both immediate and long-term feedback on communications initiatives, allowing course corrections to be made in time to be effective.

In conducting assessments, there are two types of data to consider:

**Quantitative data:** information that can be measured. These data reflect ‘how many’.

**Qualitative data:** information that can be observed and expressed as descriptions, perceptions or feelings. These data reflect the ‘what’ and ‘why’.

There are many tools available that can help an organization collect valuable employee information, such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools can improve understanding, trust, commitment, and communications among team members and facilitate more productive teams throughout the project.

The following table proposed by Paul Barton offers suggestions on the strengths/weaknesses and best use of the various tools.

TOOLS	ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK	FOCUS GROUPS	ONLINE POLLS	DIGITAL ANALYTICS	SURVEYS	COMMUNICATIONS AUDITS
Type of data collected	Qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative
Methods conducted	Feedback requests, unsolicited comments, observations, personal interviews	Informal or formal facilitated discussions	E-mail, online	Tracking software	Paper or online	Surveys, focus groups, observation, interviews, analysis
Primary strengths	Inexpensive and easy to gather, may point out other needed research	Illuminates issues, adds color to quantitative data, uncovers issues	Inexpensive, easy and fast way to get a snapshot of employee attitudes and interests	Built into most systems, multitude of data	Versatile way to collect wide range of information	Highly accurate, complete picture
Weaknesses	Not statistically valid	Group dynamics affect data quality	Doesn’t provide context, self-selected participants	Requires analysis and context	Can be expensive, time-consuming	Expensive, time-consuming

The guidelines in Chapter 3 (Evaluating external communications) of the **Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions-Phase I** apply to internal communications, as well. Rather than repeat the guidelines, this chapter presents a case study approach to discuss several aspects of employee climate surveys that could be relevant to a statistical organization’s monitoring efforts.

### **Case study 5: United States Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey**

The U.S. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)<sup>18</sup> is a web-based survey administered to most U.S. government employees that measures their perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characteristic of successful organizations are present in their agencies. The FEVS provides results at high levels of aggregation (government-wide, departmental, and agency-level), but also at the lowest level at which respondent confidentiality can be preserved, often work groups of 25 or so employees. The results provide agency leaders insight into areas where improvements have been made as well as areas where improvements are needed.

A precursor of the FEVS was first administered in 2002, and then again in 2004, 2006 and 2008. The survey was revised in 2010 to focus more on actionable items and has been administered annually since then.

Though the FEVS undergoes small periodic revisions, in 2018 it consisted of 94 items that measured Federal employees’ perceptions of broad topic areas:

- Personal Work Experiences
- Work Unit
- Agency
- Supervisor
- Leadership
- Work/Life Programs
- Satisfaction

Of interest to internal communications and employee engagement, the FEVS reports on several special indexes that aggregate responses to individual items.

One of these is the Employee Engagement Index, where engagement is defined as “An employee’s sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission.” This index is further broken down into three component sub-indexes: Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience.

The Leaders Lead sub-index is intended to reflect employees’ perceptions of the integrity of leadership, as well as leadership behaviors, such as communication and workforce motivation. It is an aggregation of responses to:

- In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce
- My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity
- Managers communicate the goals of the organization
- Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives
- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor?

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<sup>18</sup> The survey instrument, methodological detail, and government-wide results going back to 2004 are available at <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/>

The Supervisors sub-index is intended to reflect employees' perceptions of the interpersonal relationship between worker and supervisor, including trust, respect, and support. It is an aggregation of responses to:

- Supervisors in my work unit support employee development
- My supervisor listens to what I have to say
- My supervisor treats me with respect
- I have trust and confidence in my supervisor
- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?

The Intrinsic Work Experience sub-index is intended to reflect the employees' feelings of motivation and competency relating to their roles in the workplace. It is an aggregation of responses to:

- I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things
- My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment
- I know what is expected of me on the job
- My talents are used well in the workplace
- I know how my work relates to the agency's goals

Other indexes include the Global Satisfaction Index (broken into Job Satisfaction, Pay Satisfaction, Organizational Satisfaction, and Recommend Organization) and the New Inclusion Quotient Index (broken into Fair, Open, Cooperative, Supportive, and Empowering).

## **Discussion**

Employee climate surveys are tools used to solicit and assess employee opinions, feelings, perceptions, and expectations regarding a variety of factors related to organizational health, such as opportunities for growth, relations with management, working relationships, and overall environment.<sup>19</sup> Climate surveys such as the United States FEVS can have significant value in measuring employee engagement over time.

In order to have value, climate survey results must be taken seriously by senior management. The issues such surveys bring to light must be addressed. Without both the reality and the perception of responsive action, employees will quickly become disillusioned and the effort will have been wasted.

The FEVS, administered annually to approximately two million U.S. federal employees, is clearly a substantial undertaking. An effort of this magnitude would be excessive for most statistical organizations looking for a measurement tool to use internally. Nonetheless, the FEVS might serve as a useful point of departure for organizations just getting started, or as a comparative point of reference for organizations who are looking to improve the instrument they currently employ.

Though the FEVS allows U.S. statistical organizations to assess themselves against other parts of the U.S. federal workforce, this is actually of limited value. There can be a thrill in finding oneself ranked higher than a bureaucratic rival, but the department-level (or ministry-level) comparisons are only a very rough guide to whether internal communications and employee engagement initiatives as a whole have been relatively effective.

Much more useful are the internal division-level and workgroup-level results, which allow mid-level managers and supervisors to assess their own effectiveness and give upper management some insight with which to examine potential differences in approaches and outcomes across organizational units.

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<sup>19</sup> Definition adapted from <http://the-definition.com/term/climate-survey>

Like with any survey, methodological matters, such as instrument design, and operational matters, such as response rates, play a huge role in the ultimate accuracy and representational quality of the results. Thus, any climate survey instrument needs to be evaluated by survey methodologists and field tested before widespread use.

Respondent confidentiality is also critical. Statistical organizations may want to consider having a climate survey administered by a third party to ensure that management cannot identify individual employee responses.

FEVS results can be fairly variable from year to year, especially at the workgroup level. With a sample as small as 25 respondents, one or two unhappy employees, or just a few new employees, can have a notable effect on an annual score.

One disadvantage of a survey as broad as the FEVS is that it cannot address the idiosyncrasies of any particular organization or drill down to give nuanced measures of individual initiatives. As such, a statistical organization considering a similar regular organization-based climate survey might want to include a set of broad questions, which are repeated every cycle, along with a set of specific questions addressing current issues and initiatives that change from cycle to cycle.

On a related note, statistical organizations must make decisions concerning the periodicity of climate survey administration. The benefits of annual or possibly more frequent administration should be weighed against the costs of operations and respondent fatigue.

Finally, results from a periodic climate survey are not sufficient in themselves to present a full picture of an organization's internal communications and employee engagement. Ideally, the quantitative results of a climate survey should be coupled with qualitative results from structured focus groups or informal conversations. Note that the FEVS does not include any text entry fields for comments. With a smaller survey population, statistical organizations might have the resources to read and interpret free-form input that would enable employees to express more nuanced views on matters of significance.

## Chapter 7: Summary and recommendations

The High-level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics has recognized that effective internal communication and employee engagement are critical to an organization's well-being. Even the most compelling vision for the growth and development of a statistical organization cannot inspire or motivate employees unless it is shared with every staff member in a form that resonates with them both individually and collectively.

Within the context of today's ever-changing data environment, many statistical organizations are in the process of developing or reviewing their strategic objectives and their business models. With this comes the articulation of a new or refined mission, vision and values statements – the organization's roadmap. Engaged employees, can and should be the conduit through which the statistical organization engages with the outside world. To do that, employees need to be informed, feel a part of the organization, understand their role and that of the organization, and embrace the values established by its leadership.

This component of the Strategic Communications Framework proposes a number of elements a statistical institution can consider to engage effectively with its employees. The following summarizes the recommendations presented throughout the document.

### Recommendations

1. Knowing your employees is an essential first step. Employees are critical to the organization's success as they: directly impact organizational productivity; influence one another; and influence external audience perceptions, especially those of stakeholders and users.
2. Effective internal communication is one of the primary tools management has to engage staff. An effective internal communications strategy must be grounded in the reality of an organization that is genuinely driven by its mission and values. Strong internal structures consisting of a well-motivated and effective team of key players in the organization can only be created through planned and thoughtful communication.
3. Every statistical institution, regardless of its level of communications maturity, should have mission, vision and values statements. These statements, developed with the input of staff, should be part of the strategic planning process that statistical organizations use to describe their present situation and future goals.
4. Used consistently, the mission, vision and values statements become an important tool for consulting with or educating employees about an organization's existing culture and what kind of culture it would like to have.
5. Statistical institutions can use the Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model as a diagnostic tool to assess their current capabilities with respect to internal communications and employee engagement. It can also be used to identify areas for organizational development and/or improvement.
6. An effective internal communications strategy distributes the responsibilities among identified roles. Each role carries its respective responsibilities and accountabilities – from the Chief Executive to the employees - thus promoting a culture of cooperation and consistency. Information circulation should be well planned and guided by internal procedures.

7. Regular measurement and assessment of internal communications, using both quantitative and qualitative data, provides both immediate and long-term feedback on communications initiatives, allowing course corrections to be made in time to be effective.
8. Statistical institutions can consider the use of a variety of available tools to collect valuable employee information, such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools can improve understanding, trust, commitment, and communications among team members, and facilitate more productive teams throughout the organization.
9. Information gathered through the use of these tools should be analyzed and the results shared with all staff. Informing and commenting in real time will build trust between employees and the organization.

Statistical institutions should promote actions that remind employees that their voices are being heard and that they contribute to the decision-making process.

## Appendix

### Sources

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