

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).^[1]

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

Table 2. Key roles and related communications activities

Roles: Person/group responsible	Communication activity
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

[1] John M. Dalton and Susan Croft, *Managing Corporate Reputation: A Specially Commissioned Report*, Thorogood, 2003

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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.

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