Building a learning framework for internal communicators

Defining the role of strategic comms at Farm Credit Canada

Engaging employees in Pfizer’s community investment program

How to get ahead in internal communication

Communicating a One Company culture at Pitney Bowes

Guide your career to new heights
EDITORIAL BOARD

Editorial board members are respected communication practitioners, and are an integral part of the editorial direction of SCM.

Elizabeth Armstrong
Head of Marketing and Communications
Standard Chartered Bank
Singapore

Ayelet L. Baron
Senior Business Development Manager
Global Mobility
Cisco Systems, USA

Sam Berrisford
Senior Consultant, Change and Internal Communications Division
Hill & Knowlton, UK

John G. Clemons
Vice President, Communications
Raytheon Technical Services Co.
USA

Roger D’Aprix
Author
Communicating for Change
USA

Linda Dulye
President
L.M. Dulye & Co.
USA

Christina Fee
Senior Vice President, Internal Communications
Deutsche Post AG
Germany

Stuart Z. Goldstein
Managing Director
Corporate Communications
The Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation,
USA

Kim A. Hanson
South County Communications
USA

Fraser Likely
President and Managing Partner
Likely Communication Strategies Ltd.
Canada

David Moorcroft
Senior Vice President
Corporate Communications
RBC Financial Group, Canada

Bill Quirke
Managing Director
Synopsis Communication Consulting
UK

Chris Gay
Senior Vice President
ROI Communications
US

Per Zetterquist
Consultant
Occurro Strategy & Communication
Sweden

How to contact our editors
If you have comments, criticisms, suggestions for articles, or articles to submit, our editors would like to hear from you. We will be glad to send you our guidelines for authors which give further information on the editorial mission of SCM. If you have an article proposal, send a 200-word synopsis to:
Mandy Thatcher
Editor
mandy.thatcher@melcrum.com

About the publisher
Melcrum is a research and information company with offices in London and Chicago. Through our publications, research, training materials and seminars, we gather best practices from businesses around the world to help practitioners make better business decisions. Melcrum has clients in over 80 countries and has an international reputation, not only for editorial and research products of the highest standards, but also for tracking important trends in organizational communication, corporate communication, knowledge management and human resource management.
FROM THE EDITOR

Career development requires a degree of flexibility

Dear Reader,

For 10 years Melcrum has championed the importance of strategic communication and urged practitioners far and wide to resist being categorized as the editor of the staff newsletter. But a new study by Communication Competencies into how internal communicators develop professionally suggests there may be a slightly more flexible way of looking at things.

Leader or specialist?
The research (analyzed in more detail in our feature on page 16) highlights six typical roles. When you read the descriptions, it soon becomes clear that each role is important, albeit for different reasons. Even the Specialist, “a subject-matter expert in a specialist area such as web management, audio-visual production or event management,” whose role is primarily – dare we say it – tactical, has something valuable to offer.

The aim of the study was to develop a model that reflected the diverse reality of life in internal communication. The bottom line? Decide what it is you really want to do and find out how you can become an expert. Or if you head up a team, find out more about members’ strengths and aspirations and match them to the communication needs of your organization. We hope this issue gives you a few good ideas on how to go about this.

A new look for a new year

We also hope it hasn’t escaped your notice that this issue of SCM is sporting a bright and shiny new design. You’ll find your usual fix of case studies and research, plus new regular sections on leadership communication, research and measurement, technology and professional development.

As always, we’d love your feedback and any thoughts on how we can make this journal even more valuable to you.

Mandy Thatcher
Editor
E-mail: mandy.thatcher@melcrum.com

If you have any comments about any of the articles published in this issue, or if you have an idea for a future article, please contact: mandy.thatcher@melcrum.com

FEATURES

16 Building a learning framework for internal communicators
By Sue Dewhurst and Liam FitzPatrick

20 Defining the role of strategic comms at Farm Credit Canada
By Kellie Garrett and Claire Watson

24 Engaging employees in Pfizer’s community investment program
By Pam Baker and Christine Jenkins

28 How to get ahead in internal communication
Compiled by Mandy Thatcher

32 Communicating a One Company culture at Pitney Bowes
By Rob Hallam

SECTIONS

In Touch
2 Useful resources for internal communicators

The Communicators’ Network
4 The latest hot debates and shared advice

People
6 PROFILE: Bernard Charland
7 THOUGHT LEADER: Lee Smith

Technology
8 Using blogs to involve at World Bank
9 Technology update

Research & Measurement
10 Does your intranet pay its way?
11 Finding a cure for survey fatigue

Leadership Communication
12 Using message maps to guide change
13 Leaders in transition: The first 100 days

Professional Development
14 Get your development plan on track
15 Do your writing skills let you down?

Calendar
36 Upcoming events

Directory of Services
38 A list of useful service providers
Two recent surveys from Watson Wyatt Worldwide and Accenture have found that both employees and middle managers feel let down by their senior leaders.

Accenture’s 4th annual Middle Managers Survey canvassed the opinions of more than 1,400 middle managers in nine countries in Asia, North America and Europe. It found that only 39 percent felt happy in their workplace.

Although the reasons for dissatisfaction ranged from insufficient compensation to the lack of a clear career path, the findings point to a general sense of mismanagement – an opinion consistent across all the countries surveyed.

Peter Cheese, managing director of Accenture’s Human Performance practice, commented that “For the most part, middle managers care deeply about the future of their organizations and their roles in that future, but they are, to a certain extent, the ‘frozen middle.’ ” Their success depends on having a sense of security and a belief that executives understand their concerns and are taking some action. In leading companies, senior managers address these issues through clear communications, direct engagement and performance goals linked to rewards and career progression.”

“Both employees and middle managers feel let down by their senior leaders”

Compared to 2004, the WorkUSA® 2006/2007 survey, involving 12,205 full-time US workers across all job levels and major industries, showed a slight drop in senior management’s ratings from employees across most questions. For example:
- Senior management makes changes to stay competitive – down from 57 to 53 percent.
- Senior management takes steps to control costs – down from 59 to 55 percent.
- Senior management behaves consistently with the company’s core values – down from 57 to 55 percent.

“This dip in ratings is concerning because employees’ attitudes about their senior leaders are a key factor in building engagement,” said Ilene Gochman, national practice director for Organization Effectiveness at Watson Wyatt.

Link between engagement and comms
On the subject of engagement, the survey also revealed a consistent link between engaged employees and those organizations where employees received frequent communication from their senior leaders. More than half (56 percent) of highly engaged employees receive communication from senior managers at least monthly. In contrast, 42 percent of employees with low engagement levels say they receive annual communication or none at all.

“Communication is often thought to be the direct supervisor’s role,” says Gochman “but companies can create stronger teams and fuel excitement about the future if senior managers lay out the broad frameworks the firm will follow and supervisors reinforce that message. By engaging employees, such communication has a direct impact on the bottom line.”

EMPLOYERS CONCERNED ABOUT BENEFITS COMMUNICATION

Communication is one of the biggest challenges faced by employers during the annual benefits-enrollment process, according to a poll of 67 organizations by Watson Wyatt Worldwide.

While employers were satisfied with the transactional elements of benefits enrollment, they were far less happy with the effectiveness of health-improvement information, decision-support tools and cost and quality information. Well under half reported being satisfied or very satisfied with those aspects.

Employee concerns
But it was the growing complexity of the enrollment process and planned changes that most concerned employees. Nearly 30 percent of employers reported employee concerns with each of those facets.

The parts of the enrollment process that seem to demand thoughtful decisions include: contributions to health spending accounts, choosing between different plans and coordination with a spouse’s plans.

Satisfaction with the process was highest for employers using a mixture of internal and external resources to support their employees through the enrollment cycle.

In contrast, half of organizations supporting the process solely with local HR representatives were either neutral or dissatisfied, as were 42 percent of organizations primarily using outsourcing providers to support employees.
MASTERING BUSINESS IN ASIA: NEGOTIATION

>> by Peter Nixon, John Wiley, 2005

In the global village we work in today, many of us deal with subsidiaries, partners, suppliers and customers throughout Asia. Yet many of us know little about Asia.

This is a book about negotiation rather than communication, but there’s much to learn about doing business in Asia, especially if you’re a communication advisor to line managers in your organization.

The main message of the book is that the solution is always in dialogue. Differences with the West are described in terms of:

- **People**: relationships (families and networks) are more important than contracts; groups are more important than individuals; gender, age and hierarchy matter.
- **Process**: bargaining and variable pricing; financial risks, security risks and health risks; Asians fear of making mistakes (there is little performance management and even one mistake can cost a career, family loyalty, significant financial incentives); feedback (giving respect and saving face); and the wide variety of legal, financial and governance frameworks.
- **Content**: conflict avoidance (you can’t openly discuss problems); variable pricing (negotiation, dialogue); volume and margins; corruption and multiple currencies.

Much of the book covers the stages in the negotiation process: introduction, objection, creating, contracting and follow-up. It also provides detailed how-to guidelines with templates, lists and diagrams that appear to apply to negotiations everywhere, not just in Asia.

The rest of the book covers key aspects such as: communication; how to use tactics; how to control and manage information; people’s motivation and behavior; and managing specific situations and meetings.

The communication chapter covers countless aspects of face-to-face communication and much of this applies tool available to NFPs.

This blog could be a useful resource for communicators dealing with the unique challenges faced by NFPs, and those keen to take advantage of blogs and online communities. SH

BUZZWORD HELL

>> http://buzzwordhell.com/

The raison d’etre for this blog is to allow people to vent their anger about the growing number of technical buzzwords creeping into our daily language. Or as the blog’s own stated mission puts it: “We will ‘condemn’ buzzwords to the circles of hell from Dante’s Inferno.”

Most will already be familiar with terms such as folksonomy, monetization, blogosphere and social networking. For better or worse, these terms have slipped into our corporate language and are probably here to stay.

Still, next time you’re working on a communication about something technical, it might be a good idea to check that not too many of the terms you’ve used have recently been consigned to Buzzword Hell. MT

“THIS BOOK IS RECOMMENDED IF YOU HAVE BUSINESS DEALINGS IN ASIA OR ADVISE THOSE WHO DO”
the communicators’ NETWORK

In this issue we share some suggestions from the Communicators’ Network on how to conduct the most effective brainstorming sessions. There was also debate surrounding the idea of cascading information – to some it spells disaster, to others it’s an efficient way to save both time and resources. And find out what practitioners think about the use of logos for internal projects – are they helpful or just confusing?

Q Does anyone have any ideas on how to create successful brainstorming sessions between managers and employees, including field-based staff?

Denise Baron, Baron Communications & Editorial Services
Employees will be more inclined to participate in brainstorming or other idea-generating exercises, when there’s clear evidence that senior management cares about what they think and is willing to take the time to listen. It also helps immensely if some of the suggestions are actually implemented.

Unless senior managers intend to give serious consideration to the “voice of the people” in some tangible way – regardless of the format, employees will view the request as an empty exercise and will be hard-pressed to want to “engage.” So, before you embark on yet another “think tank” clone, the first question to ask yourself is not how, but why?

Tom Brannan Yes City
The ideal genuine brainstorming session only lasts about an hour, any longer and people will start to lose their creativity. Try going back to basics:
1. Decide what problem you want to solve.
2. Nominate a “problem owner.” It’s their task to give a five-minute brief on the issue to the rest of the group.
3. Don’t involve more than a dozen people in the session.
4. Give them 45 minutes to be creative in suggesting solutions.
5. Capture everything but don’t allow any evaluation – even the wildest ideas have value in sparking other thoughts.

At the end you can either simply wrap up with a summary of the ideas, or have a 15-minute break, then reassemble to start evaluating the ideas and identifying which ones are worthy of further investigation or development. Your biggest challenge is involving field-based staff. The nature of brainstorming is that it needs to be dynamic – it’s almost impossible to get the full benefit via remote links.

Richard Hare British American Tobacco
I’m not sure how you can involve field-based staff without bringing them in. I believe you get the maximum value from people collaborating by physically getting them together. I know online collaboration is possible and there are numerous examples on the web, but the will to collaborate to solve problems in this fashion tends to come from the people involved.

For the past couple of years, we’ve been facilitating “Deep Dive” events based on the method developed by Ideo.1 This was licensed by a company, turned into a product and sold as “innovation in a box.” Used in an event lasting a minimum of a day, the participants talk to experts in the area of the challenge they’re facing. It’s an innovative way to quickly get new ideas from a group. We fly people in to take part and have a team of facilitators to help them with the challenge.

Q Does anybody have any ideas for creating a cascade, with particular focus on training middle managers to do this more effectively?

Angela Sinickas Sinickas Communications Inc.
My experience and client survey results show that cascading as a way of broadcasting new information is not effective. In fact, companies in my survey database who purposely use cascading as a way of broadcasting new information, are the ones with the largest percentage of employees hearing things on the grapevine.

This is because as soon as the director or vice president conducts the first meeting, the attendees go away and discuss it with their friends in the office, whose managers have not yet had a meeting. My experience shows that employees at all levels have higher information levels on key company topics in organizations where they rely on mass communication to provide consistent and timely information to all employees. This is followed by face-to-face meetings to discuss the context of the information for each work group, and how it might affect them.

I would recommend using e-mail newsletters to those with online access and posting PDFs of the same information on as many bulletin boards as possible, to reach employees without online access.

The training I’d recommend for managers is how to provide local context

1. Learn more about the Ideo process at: http://www.ideo.com/media/nightline.asp
to higher-level information and how to facilitate discussions – not on how to present corporate bullet points effectively.

**Naomi Cohen**
BSI British Standards
Cascading has the benefit of high levels of trust (research shows the closer to the employee the messenger is, the more likely the message is to be believed), but low levels of reliability (there’s great potential for distortion of key messages going through a third party). I tend to apply a mixed approach depending on the message.

One factor, for example, is the sensitivity of the information. If it’s something that’s going to affect or threaten people’s jobs, go for face-to-face discussions as soon as possible, both to limit the amount of time staff have to speculate and to demonstrate due care/process.

If it’s information that won’t have an immediate impact, there can be value in initiating mass communication and then allowing time for face-to-face briefings. This gives staff the opportunity to think through what they’ve heard and consider questions for discussion.

**Dealing with feedback**
The key is that the cascade works both ways. It’s vital that any questions raised for which the line manager doesn’t have the answer can be sent back “up” for answering, and any feedback is equally fed back into the center.

I agree that training middle managers is useful, but so is training team/line managers as they’re the ones who usually deliver the information.

One approach that can work well is to identify internal ambassadors and use them as your grapevine. This is a group of people at mixed levels that between them touch all parts of the business and are the natural communicators, either because of their roles or their personalities.

Brief them, train them, make them feel special, explain to them the CEO’s thinking and use them to communicate key messages as a supplement to formal cascades through the management structures.

But if the objective is to communicate your CEO’s messages, then I’d personalize them from the CEO, consistently using his/her name, face and tone of voice. The more authentic the better.

**Q** Does the use of logos to brand internal communication projects create confusion, or do they help staff to quickly identify a message and its meanings?

**Nicholas Ranken**
Atos Origin
It greatly depends on your context. I worked on a major change project for a multinational company where the company identity and colors were consistently used in their internal communication.

Our project followed a previous attempt that had been a very costly failure. So we intentionally wanted to create a totally different and clearly identifiable image and logo. The project was also of high strategic importance so we wanted it to stand apart from other projects going on at the same time.

Given that the corporate colors at the time were dark blue and gray, which we felt were quite conservative and understated, we chose bright, bold colors (orange with dark blue text as a link back to the corporate colors) and a dynamic pattern to reflect the modern, innovative nature of our project.

That said, as a consumer of internal communication myself (in a different company), I’m definitely sensitive to the notion of too many competing logos and colors. An overload of logos and project names can really detract from the overall message.

**Deborah Gogarty**
British Energy
We used a logo to brand a project a few years ago.

The project was never fully embraced by the whole organization because they identified the logo as representing the project team’s responsibilities. So the audience was constantly looking for direction from the team rather than taking up the cause themselves. The logo (and the collateral that carried it) seemed to create an unconscious helplessness in the audience, which took a long time to overcome.

What I’ve learned is that logos are powerful devices and need to be unleashed only when their full potential on behavior has been gaged.

**LATEST ON THE MELCRUM BLOG**

Is good writing essential to being a good communicator? This question was posed by SCM’s editor Mandy Thatcher and responses from around the globe suggested it certainly is. “Effective communication by those who cannot write is a contradiction,” was one comment. But the broader debate in this discussion stream was whether the traditional route of professional development – where you master the tactics first and then become a good strategist, is being replaced by a new process, whereby communicators are free to pursue whatever it is they do best. Development expert Sue Dewhurst replied: “Even where people do pursue strategic roles, the fundamentals are still important.”

What came first, Google’s culture or its success? Melcrum editor Alex Manchester posed the question and commenters discussed the effectiveness of Google’s famous “20-percent free time for employees” project.

Is it time internal comms became IC? Internal communication consultant Denise Baron took issue with the suggestion that the term “internal communication” would soon be replaced by the “trendy” acronym “IC”. Baron’s response was: “For my money, IC comes too close to ICK. Nothing trendy ‘bout that!”

www.melcrumblog.com
“Thoughts and revelations on internal communication and beyond”

**JOIN THE COMMUNICATORS’ NETWORK NOW**

As a valued scm subscriber, you are entitled to join The Communicators’ Network, an online discussion forum for communication practitioners worldwide. It’s a lively community that helps you find answers to your communication questions fast. The discussion is monitored so you will receive no unsolicited e-mail, and we will seek your permission first if we would like to print any of your ideas in scm.

E-mail commsnetwork-on@melcrum.com to join and gain instant access to a global network of your peers.
DEVELOPING DELL’S DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Bernard Charland’s varied background is proving valuable in his new role, which is to focus on strategy and innovation within Dell’s global corporate communication function. A large part of this role currently is developing and coordinating Dell’s digital-media strategy. Here he describes what’s been achieved so far, future plans and lessons learned.

Tell me about your role.
Until recently I was head of global internal communication at Dell, but I moved into a new role six months ago to leverage my consulting and agency background. The best way to describe my role is lead consultant for the communication function, with a focus on driving strategy and innovation.

What does this role entail?
A priority right now is to develop and implement Dell’s new digital-media strategy. More broadly, my mandate is to look at what we’re doing and should be doing over the next six months and figure out how we can have more of an impact across all our audiences.

How would you describe the Dell culture?
The company is much bigger than it used to be, but the culture still has a strong bias for action and lack of complacency. The expectation for our team is to remain nimble and proactive and look for ways to constantly improve and reinvent how we do things. My new position is a direct reflection of that. There’s a need for an overarching perspective, someone with a communication and consulting background who can dive in, develop strategies and direct projects.

What projects are you working on?
We’ve already launched an internal and external blog and have just introduced Studio Dell, an online vlog outlet geared to core customer groups containing video clips, product profiles and interviews. Dell also recently established a presence in Second Life. Part of my role is to help keep all these initiatives coordinated.

What issues do you face?
One question we’re looking to answer is how to develop and expand our blogs. Should we have external blogs for different language groups, such as Japanese and Mandarin? And if so, how do we proceed? Internally, should we develop blogs for some of the regions or particular divisions of the company?

What have you learned about the social-media environment?
We were one of the first major global companies to join the blogosphere. But the general consensus initially among observers was that we were talking about issues that were relevant to us, rather than customers or pundits outside Dell. We’ve learned from that and made changes to ensure we listen as well as talk.

What can social media do internally?
Last year was a tumultuous year for Dell in terms of our performance. Employees now need regular updates and discussion around the situation and what we plan to do to improve. So the internal philosophy is to be even more candid and transparent with employees than we’ve been. For example, we’re using the blog to facilitate conversations between employees and executives.

Have leaders resisted this approach?
There’s an understanding among leadership that we need to be candid and willing to listen to criticism and respond to it. The leadership team understand that credibility is paramount and are willing to share the facts wherever they can.

What advice would you offer to organizations about to start a blog?
Some companies make the mistake of being enamoured with new technology, but don’t have a clear reason for using it.

We were very clear about why we were getting involved – to have better conversations with our stakeholders, particularly our customers. This goal helps us to define the rules of engagement and guides the editorial content. Externally, if it isn’t relevant or helpful to customers, we don’t blog about it. Our strategic purpose internally is to be more transparent, relevant and credible when we talk to employees.

Also, do your homework. We did a lot of benchmarking and looked at what other companies were doing – good and bad – to get a sense of what we should be striving for.

Finally, don’t just add to the noise. There’s already a huge volume of information out there. Thing about how your blog can add something useful.

How would you respond to the criticism Dell received in the blogosphere last year?
We knew Dell would be criticized by some of the influential bloggers. We knew there would be skepticism in view of the company’s customer service and financial issues in 2006. But we listened, adapted and learned from that. Now that we’re part of the conversation, a mentality of continuous improvement is always critical to doing well.

Bernard Charland acts as lead in-house consultant for Dell’s global corporate communication function, focusing on communication strategy and innovation. Previous to this role, he was director of Global Internal Communications for the company.
It takes dedication, but a post-graduate degree can be professionally and personally beneficial.

THOUGHT LEADER: LEE SMITH

IS FURTHER STUDY THE ROUTE FOR YOU?

Who said professional development was easy? Commitment, perseverance and patience are some of the attributes Lee Smith found invaluable as he worked towards obtaining his masters degree.

I’ve always taken my professional development seriously. From the moment I entered the communication profession in 1991, I’ve worked hard to hone existing skills, build new ones and broaden my knowledge. Some have called me dedicated, others obsessive.

During those 16 years, I’ve participated in dozens of training courses, attended more than 50 conferences, sacrificed many an evening to study, supported two professional bodies, judged industry awards, written articles, organized events, volunteered for charities and mentored many aspiring communicators.

My biggest development feat
Yet all of this pales into insignificance when compared to my biggest developmental feat so far – earning an MSc in Corporate Communication and Reputation Management. It’s like comparing a gentle stroll to scaling a large mountain.

I finally graduated from the University of Manchester Business School in December 2006, but it took me five long years to reach that point. Having enrolled as a svelte twenty-something, I graduated an overweight and slightly graying 35-year-old. It was a slow and occasionally painful ascent.

The first steps
Back in 2001, what appealed to me about the course was its strategic focus. Unlike some post-graduate courses, the Manchester MSc is genuinely multi-disciplinary, touching on communication theory, branding, psychology, stakeholder management, ethics and business strategy – to name a few.

It’s also refreshingly practical, combining robust academic thinking with real-world case studies. While I wanted academic rigor, it was very important to me to be able to practically apply the learning at work.

It took me some time to understand the relevance of the “Sc” in MSc. Science was a subject I detested at school, but I recognized its importance to my future as a communicator. I was also very aware of my own weakness in that area. That’s one of the benefits I’ve gained from the course – a real appreciation of good research and the knowledge to do it well.

Things went well academically, though juggling part-time study with a full-time career is never easy. I was disciplined enough to invest the necessary time and to gradually work my way through the course reading list and good marks followed.

A balancing act
The course proved a little more challenging on a personal level. Work-life balance is hard enough to achieve, let alone work-study-life balance. Something had to give and I can’t pretend I was always a joy to be with during that period.

It didn’t help that I lived nearly 80 miles away in Birmingham. During those years I saw more of the M6 motorway than your average lorry driver. I also spent far too many nights eating bad food in cheap Manchester hotels, all of which eventually took its toll.

Then came the exams, nearly 30 hours of them. Again, I’d done my homework, so I managed to come away with decent marks.

My final hurdle, the dreaded dissertation, took around two years to complete. I chose to focus on organizational identity and, just to make my life tougher, decided to use a rather obscure psychological research technique. Getting to grips with that, finding the time to conduct lengthy interviews, analyze results and craft my tome, was incredibly difficult.

Being a perfectionist, I took it right to the wire – submitting my final document just before the university’s ultimate deadline.

Time to celebrate
Last month saw the end of my long and arduous journey. The ritual of the graduation ceremony was a fitting ending and helped draw a line under that particular chapter of my professional development story.

There’s no doubt that the course was beneficial and, although the journey was sometimes difficult, the experience was mostly enjoyable. I fell just 3 percent short of the distinction grade I wanted, but I’m still very proud of my achievement. And I know I’m now a much more thoughtful and effective communicator.

Would I recommend the MSc route to other communicators? Yes, but I would make sure they realize the enormity of the challenge. A part-time MSc is not for everyone. It will demand considerable time, energy and effort and may well take its toll on your personal life, and your waistline. But if you persevere over the long run, it might just be worth it.

Now, about that PhD...

Lee Smith, FCIPR, is a director of Gatehouse, specializing in internal communication for professional and financial services businesses. He also authors the Talking Internal Communication blog at www.talkingic.typepad.com.
Using blogs to involve at World Bank

In 2006, the World Bank set up a blog to spark interest and involvement in a major, organizationwide planning event. The positive response has inspired a more adventurous and experimental approach to blogging. Based on recent experiences, senior communications officer Michele Egan reflects on the potential benefits and pitfalls of using this tool.

Creating dialogue within an organization and encouraging involvement are two of the major attractions associated with blogs. These were also the primary reasons behind the World Bank’s decision to launch their first internal blog last year.

The occasion was the organization’s annual meeting, a series of events held in Singapore in 2006. This 10-day event brings together around 10,000 people including media representatives, to discuss issues related to poverty reduction and international economic development.

According to Egan, traditional methods used previously to report on the event, such as articles, video and audio links on the internet and intranet sites, had failed to spark employees’ interest in the progress and outcomes of the meetings. Blogging seemed like a good way drive to employees’ interest and involvement.

Objectives of the blog

Egan summarizes the objectives and rationale behind the blog as follows:

- To provide an alternate voice to share the business outcomes of the meetings, using informal, first-person reporting of behind-the-scenes activities.
- To encourage the use of other resources by linking blog readers to more serious information.
- To encourage employee interaction and increase dialogue.

Throughout the event, the blog was updated daily by the head of internal communication. The entries were unedited, but reader comments were moderated before they were posted.

Outcomes and evaluation

According to Egan, this blogging experiment surpassed their expectations by helping to achieve the following three outcomes:

1. Renewed credibility for the voice of internal communication. “Corporate communication always suffers the reputation of towing management’s line. The tone and delivery of the blog entries very clearly did not. We had many comments along the lines of: ‘Finally, the real story!’”

2. A feeling of inclusion. “By providing a sense of the context and atmosphere, employees who didn’t attend the event still felt like they were part of it. Many commented that: ‘For the first time, I feel I’m there.’”

3. Better awareness of the outcomes of the meetings. “The blog provided the hook into other channels of information, which staff may not otherwise have consulted. The first thing some of the readers did in the morning was to check the blog.”

Egan admits that there were some who were initially skeptical about blogging.

“We did have a couple of comments on the blog saying: ‘This is frivolous,’ but others responded by saying: ‘Lighten up! This makes a nice change from all the boring, official information.’”

Another problem was a potentially offensive remark which had to be removed, prompting the composition of an official blogging policy to define the roles and responsibilities of authors and commenters.

Optimistic about the new tool

Following on from the success of this first blog, the communication team has since launched a variety of blogs, some of which have been successful, others less so. Ironically, a blog set up to discuss a worldwide conference on communication got minimal response. Staff participation in external blogs has also been low. But Egan remains optimistic about the potential of this tool.

“There are millions of blogs out there and lots of participation in them. But in a business setting, it takes a bit more time before a community of practice develops and people believe that this is a trusted space where they can comment without being ridiculed or scorned.”

Advice to corporate bloggers

To build confidence in the tool, Egan has plans to launch an internal marketing campaign, and the organization’s new intranet site will provide a forum for future blogging developments.

Egan’s primary advice to fellow corporate bloggers is to keep the content genuine. “It becomes very obvious, very quickly who is doing the writing.” She also suggests keeping blogs topic or event-specific and avoiding general musings.

Her final reminder is that blogs shouldn’t replace traditional tools, but compliment them. “Blogs can be fabulous, but you need to put them in context with the other tools that are available. Be very clear about their purpose.”

Michele Egan is a senior communications officer in the World Bank Group’s internal communications unit. Among other tasks, she leads the development and delivery of the group’s electronic communication tools.
INTRANETS EMBRACE SOCIAL MEDIA

Neilson Norman’s latest report on the top 10 intranet designs of 2007, shows an increase in the use of multimedia and social media on intranet sites.

Although multimedia was a significant feature in last year’s list, this year sees photos, video, news feeds and webcams put to more innovative use. Indicating that social media has not been a passing fad of 2006, many of the intranets have implemented popular Web 2.0 features like blogs (with specific business angles) and business-relevant wikis.

Video is being used for training and corporate communication, but organizations such as American Electric Power have pushed the use of this channel, by setting up a TV studio for intranet productions, offering employees streaming video and live webcasts.

News feeds have long been used on intranets, but this year, the best selections offer more relevant internal and external news, and involve employees by allowing them to rate stories and comment.

Translation comes out tops

Many of the report’s winning intranets offer language translation for their international employees. Dow Chemical, for example, uses English for most global content, but translates important content into Dutch, German, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Selected content is also translated into Chinese, Greek, Japanese and Thai.

A total of 49 different technology products are used by the report’s top intranets, with Windows Server, Google Search Appliance and SharePoint being among the most popular. SH

CALCULATING THE ROI ON BLOGGING

The difficulty of placing a precise monetary value on corporate blogging is one of the setbacks of this tool. But a new report from Forrester called Calculating the ROI of blogging, offers ways to identify the benefits, costs and risks that corporate blogging involves, using a three-stage process:

1. Quantify and assign value to the key benefits of blogging.
2. Estimate the costs of blogging.
3. Incorporate risk calculations into the ROI model.

The report describes how to measure the impact blogging has on the business outcomes using “metrics that everyone is familiar with.” For example, the monetary value of press mentions can be measured by counting the number of blog-driven stories by online press, web media and high-profile bloggers, and then calculating the cost of advertising in the same publications.

General Motors’ case study

The report also features a case study on General Motors’ two-year-old blog, FastLane, to which the authors apply their ROI process. Rather than presenting the company with a final numerical figure, they’ve come up with new objectives, advising them how to get the maximum benefits from blogging and improve its impact on business outcomes.

Whether you’ve already started blogging or are about to take the plunge, this report provides direction on how to evaluate how your blog and decide which direction it needs to go in to gain maximum business value. SH

http://www.forrester.com

SENIOR EXCECS BIG ON NEW MEDIA

A survey of 100 CEOs and CMOs from Fortune 2,000 companies found that 76 percent of senior executives are experimenting with alternative media such as blogs, Second Life and social networking.

The study by Weber Shandwick and KRC Research found that 69 percent of those surveyed currently use social networking, while 37 percent plan to use it more over the next five years.

Ninety-one percent of those surveyed currently make use of their company website and 66 percent plan to use their website more over the next five years, making it number one in the survey’s list of media tools.

Use of virtual worlds to grow

Avatar-based marketing, (marketing through virtual worlds, such as Second Life) came last in the list of 20 media tools senior executives plan to use over the next five years. However, researchers believe that the use of virtual worlds in communication and marketing will increase as more companies learn how to use them more effectively.

Billee Howard, managing director of the Global Strategic Media Group at Weber Shandwick said: “We’re in the early days of a totally new media era. Those companies that do not combine the new-media paradigm with the best of traditional media will most certainly proceed at their peril.” SH

Source: The Changing Face of Marketing and Communications in Today’s Creativity Economy

http://www.webershandwick.com

http://www.nngroup.com/
When talking about return on investment (ROI) for the intranet and other “soft” benefits, these are the kinds of results or outcomes usually referred to:

**Measurable ROI from hard benefits**
- less paper;
- less hardware;
- less headcount; and
- increased sales.

**Soft benefits include:**
- increased employee productivity;
- better customer satisfaction;
- faster time to market; and
- improved employee retention.

IBM, Oracle and Cisco all measure the impact and benefits of their intranet. All of them have measured the value to be greater than US$1 billion. In fact, IBM has realized benefits from e-learning via the intranet alone to be more than US$284 million.

BT, the UK telecommunications company, uses an online idea jar for employees, called “Personnel Today.” Employee ideas have saved BT nearly UK£100 million over the past four years.

**Sodexho’s SuperSleuth**
One of my personal favorites is the Sodexho USA Sales SuperSleuth. SuperSleuth is an intranet web page and application that encourages employees to submit sales leads and prospective clients via the intranet.

The SuperSleuth intranet page generates cash rewards of up to US$1,000 for the person making the submission. Sodexho says it has contributed to a 100-percent increase in sales leads. In fact, the SuperSleuth tool has led to US$90 million in managed volume (net client sales including sales by client). This is proof positive of a killer application.

**Impressive numbers**
As impressive as those numbers are, you don’t have to be a large technology company to realize measured ROI benefits – ROI isn’t reserved solely for big multinationals.

QAS is a world leader in address management and data accuracy. Based on data secured from national postal authorities and other leading sources, QAS captures, cleans and enhances the integrity of name and address data. QAS has 400 employees with offices in the UK (headquarters), US, Canada, Singapore, Australia and across Europe.

While awards are nice to receive, the QAS intranet has received more than just kudos – it’s delivering measured results and value for the business. Some of the measured ROI benefits include:

- **Online expenses**: saved four person-days per month.
- **Finance savings**: online workflow has reduced administrative processing time from two weeks to one day.
- **Purchase ordering**: saved four person-days per month and an ROI savings of US$20,000 per year.
- **Sales proposal builder**: streamlined proposal and sales process saves almost US$25,000 per year.
- **Intranet use**: 115-percent increase in usage of the intranet (inference a yet to be measured productivity gain).

Of all the measurements, perhaps the single most important is ROI. To maximize the intranet’s value and potential, you must secure the support of senior management. If you want their attention and support, you better talk their talk. Nothing gets their attention more than ROI.

**Sell the sizzle**
If executives view the intranet as a cost center, then it’s your responsibility to sell the sizzle and prove the value with hard data. ROI is everything in some organizations (for example, in financial services). Other more progressive companies are intent to know and track employee satisfaction and productivity. Still others want to know both. It all depends on your organization and culture. However, only through measurement will the intranet become a measured quantity and a proven asset.

Source: *Transforming your intranet*
[www.melcrum.com](http://www.melcrum.com)

---

**Toby Ward** is a broadcast journalist turned consultant. He founded and launched Prescient Digital Media (www.PrescientDigital.com) in early 2001. His specialisms are site evaluation and strategic planning. He blogs at: www.IntranetBlog.com
There are three situations that are most likely to create plummeting survey response rates:

1. When a group never hears the findings of past surveys, or any resulting changes, they begin to think their opinions don’t matter. If their past opinions were valued so lightly, they feel less urgency to share further opinions.

2. When the group being researched is relatively small, researchers typically need to poll the entire group on each survey rather than querying a random sample. For example, if you have 1,000 employees, you would need to obtain 259 responses to have results accurate within a margin of error of 5 percentage points. If the company is typically receiving a 25-percent response rate on surveys, that means that all 1,000 employees need to be invited to participate in the survey to get about the minimum necessary number of responses for a sufficient level of accuracy. Unfortunately, even for larger groups, researchers sometimes survey the whole group on every survey instead of identifying the right size random sample.

3. When surveys are badly designed, respondents quit them midway through. The respondent’s feeling is: “If the company can’t be bothered to design a good survey, I’m not going to waste my time taking it.” Some major survey design flaws include questions that are difficult to understand, questions with insufficient or inappropriate response options, or questions that seem to have little relevance for the respondent. Other major design turn-offs are surveys that are too long or that are composed mostly of open-ended essay questions, both of which take too much time to answer. Finally, asking too many demographic questions, especially at the beginning of a survey, compromises respondents’ sense of anonymity and kills their desire to answer even the first real question.

The following steps will help overcome these three problems.

Connect research to results
Some companies have a long history of not communicating results or outcomes of previous surveys. If that’s true of your organization, try these two techniques:

- On a regular basis, when announcing changes the company is making, connect the changes with related survey results – even if a change wasn’t made solely because of the research. Your audience will get the message that stakeholder opinions are a regular factor in the way management makes decisions.
- In the invitation to a new survey, begin with key findings and changes that were made based on a similar past survey, and ask respondents to let you know through the new survey if the company is still on track. This way your potential respondents hear that completing surveys does result in changes – at the very moment they’re determining if your latest survey is worth their time.

Use short surveys
The shorter the survey, the more likely people are to give you their time. If you have 100 questions that must be answered, break them into three separate surveys of about 33 questions and administer them to three, mirror-image random samples. You’ll be surveying more people, but each participant’s time commitment will be relatively minor.

Also consider doing very short “stealth surveys” by phone, for which you don’t obtain advance permission. People might not even know they’ve been surveyed. As you (and a team of volunteers) have these conversations with respondents, you would record their answers on a questionnaire.

Coordinate surveys
To avoid asking the same people to respond to too many surveys within a short time, coordinate all employee or customer surveys through a clearing house so that the timing of surveys doesn’t overlap and you don’t ask questions for which answers are already available.
Facilitate a meeting with the leadership team to agree and articulate the change story

SALLY HARRIS

USING MESSAGE MAPS TO GUIDE CHANGE

Sally Harris, director of the Communications and Engagement practice at Molten, believes it’s often the simplest tools that are most effective in encouraging leaders to think more strategically about their communications. Here she explains why the “message map” is one such tool.

Organizations today – driven by increased competition, merger-and-acquisition activity and large, complex transformation programs – are characterized by the need for constant and rapid change. In our experience, consistent leadership communications are at the center of helping their organizations address these challenges.

With all the complex transformation programs we work on, we encourage the leadership team to create a simple one-page “message map” to use over a defined timeframe. The message map, which we link to key program milestones and successes, helps the leadership team to plan what they’ll share with employees and other stakeholders, and when.

Message maps can address common failures of leadership communication. During global, cross-functional programs, when all leaders consistently reinforce the same messages, they emerge as a joined-up, forward-thinking team.

Message maps are also effective when building up communication to employees over time, rather than overwhelming staff with changes or diminishing leadership credibility by waiting too long to communicate.

Compiling a message map

The process we’ve used in the past to help leaders develop a message map is quite straightforward. This is what we do:

• We encourage leaders to work together to agree and articulate the story. Agreeing the story typically requires experienced facilitation. This encourages leaders to define how the story will build and then gain momentum and commitment over time.

• The story is then converted into a simple message map. The map should make sense to all change-program leaders, as this tool will guide the majority of their communication to employees. It should also provide a clear view of what’s coming next. Message maps are often shown as straightforward timelines, but there are other effective ways to present them (see Figure One below).

• Once the change story has been agreed and committed to paper, leaders use the map to know when communications should be delivered and what supporting documentation to use for a consistent cascade.

Revisiting communication plans

Of course the content of the message map will need to be revisited. Message maps, as with all communications, evolve over time. They should be frequently reviewed to ensure that the messages – and time-scales – remain relevant to the program and align with program milestones.

Sally Harris is director of the Communications and Engagement practice at Molten, where she specializes in managing large-scale communication and change programs for global clients.
LEADERS IN TRANSITION: 
THE FIRST 100 DAYS

In a recent Melcrum survey, 44 percent of respondents said they plan to spend more or much more on communication training for leaders and managers. With the topic firmly on the agenda for the foreseeable future, this issue sees the launch of a new regular column by leadership communication expert Darren Briggs. He kicks off with advice on making the most of the CEO’s first 100 days – a critical time for any new leader.

In May last year, the management consultants Booze Allen Hamilton published their annual report on chief executive attrition, The Crest of the Turnover Wave. After studying the movements of CEOs from the largest 2,500 companies in the world, they uncovered some rather startling facts. An incredible 1 in 7 CEOs will change job over the next 12 months, with poor-performing CEOs staying in office for two years. By comparison, the high-performing CEO stays in the job for just under eight years.

Given that their tenure may be brief, this research only reinforces that the first 100 days for the chief executive is a critical time.

Creating myths and legends
Over the past 20 years, I’ve had the good fortune to work for some great brands and leaders. Experience tells me that during their first 100 days, the reputation they bring from their previous job will either be validated or contradicted. Everything they say and do will be scrutinised. Perceptions will be quickly formed about their style and personality. Myths and legends will become the hottest gossip in the workplace.

With this in mind, it’s critical to quickly establish their reputation and what they stand for. Internal communication can play a valuable role in supporting the CEO, and in turn, establish a long-term relationship with their new leader.

Uncovering perceptions
Developing a personalized communication strategy must start by finding out how the new leader is perceived. While a quantitative survey may satisfy those with a hunger for numbers, qualitative research will uncover how people really view the CEO as an individual and leader.

With these insights it’s possible to develop a plan to shape the existing reputation into one they would like to have in the new organization. This means identifying what they stand for and helping them articulate how this supports and builds the brand of the organization.

Charismatic leaders
If you think about charismatic leaders such as Stuart Rose of Marks & Spencer, Richard Branson of Virgin, or Phil Knight of Nike, organizational culture is heavily influenced by the personality of its chief executive.

The behavior that resides within the organization is typically a reflection of the CEO’s behavior and becomes associated with the brand. So it’s important to define what the new CEO wants the corporate brand to stand for and what they can do to achieve that brand image and set an example for the whole company.

At The Company Agency, we find that many CEOs are looking for strategic communication support, coaching and guidance that goes beyond what they receive from their rostered PR agency. They operate in a world that’s typically quite lonely, where information is frequently filtered, they’re under a constant spotlight and a gap exists between them, their people and their customers. Internal communication can play a key role in helping the CEO bridge this gap.

A simple checklist
Every CEO is different and faces different challenges, but here’s a simple checklist if you find yourself working with a new CEO or in a new role with an established CEO:

• Ask your CEO what kind of person they would like to be viewed as by employees – coach them on communication behavior that can help them achieve this goal.
• Establish very quickly what the CEO’s key message is – ask questions until it is crystal clear.
• Know your business and brief your CEO on what type of communication is effective or not within your organization.
• Provide informed guidance on emerging communication trends – such as social media – and explain the business impact.
• Understand how the CEO listens to what people are saying.
• Determine the CEOs communication preferences – how does he or she like to receive and share information both inside and outside work?

You should expect to be the leader’s communicator – developing messages and ensuring they’re conveyed in the most appropriate way. But the balance should be tipping more towards being the communication leader – a role where you’re providing strategic counsel to the CEO and coaching them so they’re more effective in their new role and environment.

Darren Briggs

Darren Briggs is partner at The Company Agency, where he advises and coaches senior leaders to be more effective communicators. He has 20 years corporate experience working at chief executive and board level with companies such as British Airways, Microsoft, Nike, PepsiCo and Vodafone.
A study into skills and competencies for communicators reveals a lack of clear career planning

GET YOUR DEVELOPMENT PLAN ON TRACK

The path to a senior role in internal communication is paved with good intentions. Or so suggests a recent study by development experts, Sue Dewhurst and Liam FitzPatrick. Here, in the first of a new regular column on professional development, they review the study’s findings, lament the lack of a career plan and urge internal communicators to take action and plan their own development.

The title of advertising guru Paul Arden’s book It’s not how good you are, it’s how good you want to be, captures the essence of ambition. And our recent survey suggests that this is a message internal communicators should take to heart.

As part of our research to define a list of core skills and competencies for professional communicators, we asked practitioners from around the world about their future career goals and how they plan to achieve them. Surprisingly, for a profession that stresses the need for strategies and plans, most internal communicators appear to have a fairly ad hoc approach to their own development.

Results from the survey

About 70 percent of our sample said they expected to stay in internal communication over the next three years. Thirty-two percent saw themselves gaining more experience within their existing jobs, while 37 percent aim to move into a different internal communication role.

When we asked respondents what they were doing to help develop their careers, gaining wider experience, being better networked and finding a coach came top of their lists.

Be honest with yourself

Now, these seem like fairly informal activities. You might think they take less organizing than, say, investing the time and budget to do a course or study for a formal qualification. But if you’re being honest, you know that getting the go-ahead to work on more challenging projects, finding the right coach and building a professional network takes time and planning. These things don’t just happen overnight – unless you’re very lucky.

Yet less than a quarter of internal communicators have a formal plan to help structure their thoughts about career progression and make sure their development objectives are met. Twenty-one percent say they have no plan whatsoever, and about half the respondents we contacted say they have a plan, but it’s not formalized or agreed.

Make the time

Making time to discuss your career goals with your manager and getting a personal development plan down on paper will pay dividends. After all, who decides whether you get to work on the more interesting projects or not? And when you’re being dragged under by your workload, wouldn’t it be helpful to have some targets to remind you to make the time to network or read that article sitting in your reading folder?

If we’ve convinced you to think about your own professional development, here are three important steps to get started.

1. **Be clear about where you’re starting from.** Think about what you’ve achieved so far in your career. What skills do you have, what are your strengths and which areas need further development?

2. **Look ahead to where you want to be.** What timeframe do you have in mind for your professional development? What can you focus on right away and what are your longer-term career goals? Be as specific as you can about what you want to achieve and consider the following:
   - Are there areas where you’d like to be a “star performer” in your current role?
   - How can you expand your network or reach in the wider industry?
   - How can you broaden your depth of skills or experience outside your current remit?
   - How do you plan to move onwards and upwards to a new role?

3. **Think about how you’ll close the gap.** What knowledge, skills and experience do you need? What type of development activity will help you get to where you want to be?

If you know in your heart of hearts that you don’t invest enough time and effort in your own development, make the time to start doing this now.

In our next column, we plan to look at the range of development options available and hear some reflections from industry leaders on what helped them really accelerate their own learning and professional development.

---

1. Turn to page 16 for a more detailed analysis of the study

**SUE DEWHURST AND LIAM FITZPATRICK**

Sue Dewhurst and Liam FitzPatrick run Competent Communicators, a company specializing in professional development for internal communicators and Melcrum’s official training and development partner. For more information go to: www.competentcommunicators.com

**“THESE THINGS DON’T JUST HAPPEN OVERNIGHT – UNLESS YOU’RE VERY LUCKY”**
DO YOUR WRITING SKILLS LET YOU DOWN?

A recent discussion on the Melcrum blog raised the question of whether or not good writing skills are still important to the more strategically focused communicator. The consensus was a definite yes – your writing ability makes an impression and it’s up to you whether that’s good or bad. Denise Baron provides some advice on how to make sure it’s the former.

No one’s work is as continually visible in an organization as the communicator’s. Our superiors, our peers and the entire employee population see us as the paragons of communications competence. They look to the messages we’ve crafted as models of writing excellence and will pattern their own accordingly.

When you think of it, it’s one heck of a burden to bear. After all, how else did you get the job if you couldn’t write well?

But regardless of how well you do write, how senior you are, or how long you’ve had that coveted “seat at the table,” when it comes to writing, you’ll always have room to grow. That’s because writing is, as one learned professor so wisely termed it, a “lifelong apprenticeship.”

Here are three ways to improve your writing immediately.

1. **Avoid the passive voice**

   The passive voice manages to creep into messages to employees, and it’s a sure road to eroding their engagement. It allows the writer to hide behind the message, it clouds direction and it’s boring.

   Here’s an example of really woeful writing – a sentence structure that you’re sure to recognize: *Employees are encouraged to submit this form by the end of the month.*

   Analyze that sentence and you’ll see that not only is there no owner to the statement, but there’s no clear direction. Employees are encouraged by whom, and what does “encouraged” mean anyway? Are employees required to submit the form? If so, then say so.

   The sad truth is this passive style of writing is all too common; the happy truth is that we communicators are in a position to do something about it. Often, all it takes is a quick rewrite: *Please submit this form by [insert specific date].* Clear, direct, concise.

2. **Use second person**

   Why talk at people when you can talk to them? When you’re communicating with employees, the use of “you” can be friendly and inviting.

   Take this message: *XYZ Company employees at customer locations should always first check with their hosts to ensure that connecting to the XYZ network is permitted.*

   Look what happens when it’s rewritten from third person into second: *If you’re working at a customer site, be sure to first check with your host that it’s OK to connect to our network.*

   You’ve gone from impersonal to conversational.

3. **Cut the jargon**

   Jargon may have its place, but it has no place in employee communication. Phrases such as work-life balance, employer of choice, critical mass and the like may make sense in behind-the-scenes discussions. However, when it’s time to communicate to the masses, we need to translate these concepts into Plain English and provide a context to help employees understand. Yes, it takes some work, but the payoff makes it worth the effort.

   Say the head of HR wants to share the latest developments in “work-life balance” that will benefit employees. He may be tempted to relay the news using the terminology he’s used to using with his staff. However, most employees haven’t been in on those discussions, so the concept may be foreign or fuzzy to them – even if they’d heard the term before.

   Any progress HR makes on the work-life balance front gives it the opportunity to communicate in a personal, human way, and in the process, capture employees’ attention on an emotional level.

   The HR leader’s message, therefore, may go something like this: *Our lives have never been busier, and there are only so many hours in a day. Because we at XYZ Company recognize how important it is to you to be able to spend real time with your families while managing the responsibilities you have on the job, we’ve designed a program that we hope will make your life less hectic...* Most employees will relate to that message. It plays to their needs, which is a powerful hook.

**Guarding against gremlins**

Keeping an eye out for the jargon, passive voice and other gremlins that may infiltrate your writing is a good training ground for being able to objectively critique your own work. It also conditions you to look for other ways to improve your writing, a habit that will serve you well throughout your lifelong apprenticeship.

---

Denise Baron is president of Baron Communications, a business communications consultancy providing strategic planning and marketing, internal communication project management and editorial services to Fortune 500 companies.
Planning your team’s professional development means understanding the skills and experience needed to be successful. Sue Dewhurst and Liam FitzPatrick of Competent Communicators have been researching how internal communicators spend their time at work and what behaviors the most effective practitioners display. Here they describe a new learning framework that has emerged from the study.

Over the past five years, we’ve found ourselves becoming more and more involved in conversations about careers in internal communication. As the profession matures, expectations of its practitioners are rising and, for many people, a job in communication is no longer just a short-term stepping-stone en route to better things.

But the question we hear time and time again is “What does ‘good’ look like when it comes to internal communication?” What skills, knowledge and experience should an effective internal communicator have at various stages in their career? How do I know what I should be personally aspiring to and measuring myself against? How can I best develop my team? Where is the definitive framework to help me recruit the best person for the job?

In recent years, there have been a number of good attempts to answer these questions. In the UK, a group of professional bodies got together to write the Inter-Comm matrix. It listed the skills, knowledge and experience a practitioner might need according to their level of experience. Some well-respected consultancies have also developed models to show how a typical career path might progress, which have helped structure career planning for individuals and teams.

A flexible model for a diverse profession

Despite the success of the Inter-Comm matrix, we felt there was more to be done in the area of professional development for internal communicators. Fundamentally, existing models tend to show a one-dimensional and predictable career path, starting as a junior deliverer and developing into a strategic, business-focused consultant.

The implication is that if you’re delivering communication or are tactically focused, you must have a junior role, and if you have a more senior role, you don’t get your hands dirty doing mundane things like writing or managing the
intranet or organizing events.

But clearly the world of internal communication isn’t quite that straightforward. People join the profession via all kinds of routes and at different stages of their careers.

We interviewed someone who started out as the director’s PA; a successful senior executive who started out as an engineer; a former psychology lecturer; and others who had joined through more obvious routes in publishing and PR.

Some had started out in junior roles. For others, their first role in internal communication was as a business partner. Others had already reached a senior position in another function and simply moved across at the same level.

A key objective of this study was to develop a model that reflected the diverse reality of life in internal communication, one that was flexible enough to be adapted to fit organizations and communication teams of all shapes and sizes.

So we began our research by surveying communicators worldwide to find out how they actually spend their time on a daily basis and what skills, knowledge and experience they regularly use.

The six types of practitioner
Statistical analysis of the survey data suggested there were six stereotypical role types within internal communication. By “types” we mean segments or groups of people who share very similar characteristics in terms of their skills and strengths, spend their time carrying out similar types of activities, and whose outputs tend to be judged in similar ways.

Most importantly, these types can be plotted against two dimensions based on how they spend their time (advising or doing) and where their focus is (strategy or tactics). Figure One (right) illustrates these six types and how they plot against the two dimensions.

Clearly, every organization is slightly different, but the six stereotypes described below should provide a starting point for thinking about the roles and types of people you need in your team.

1. The Leader
Internal communication leaders manage teams and lead the function either for an entire organization, or for a large division or territory. They spend much of their time managing and coaching team members and working with senior managers. They see themselves as business people first and communicators second. However, it’s taken as read that they have sound technical ability and will roll up their sleeves when needed. Great internal and external networkers, they’re skilled at dealing with uncertainty and conflict. They’re likely to be measured on business results and through the subjective opinion of their senior customers.

2. The Advisor
Advisors support departments or major projects by providing advice, developing communication plans and providing hands-on support to deliver them. Local managers trust them for their insights into business problems and understanding of how their organization really works. Through well-developed networks and time spent understanding their audiences and carrying out research and feedback, they know what’s really going on. They’re judged on the quality of their advice and their ability to translate that advice into plans, activities and actions.

3. The Manager
The internal communication manager has excellent craft skills and a sound knowledge of channels. They spend most of their time on delivery. When they advise, it’s normally about the best channels to use or the most appropriate timing. Good managers aren’t easily intimidated and are great at juggling different priorities. They’re skilled at translating between the boardroom and the shop floor. Their contribution is often measured by their ability to deliver activity against a plan and the quality of work they and their team produce.

4. The Deliverer
Most teams have someone in this role – a safe pair of hands who can be trusted to make things happen. That might range from compiling distribution lists through to running a conference, sorting out the CEO’s open forum or writing and editing a newsletter. They’re less likely to supervise other communicators and depend on their organizational and craft skills to get the job done. People value them for their ability to do things on time and to a high standard.

![Figure One: Six typical role types for internal communicators](image-url)
**KEY POINTS**

- A new study has established how communicators spend their time and what skills, knowledge and experience they regularly use.
- The research identifies six stereotypical roles ranging from a communication leader to a specialist (e.g., a web or events expert).
- It also highlights 12 competencies that clarify the behaviors a competent practitioner should display at each level. An “ineffective” category shows behaviors displayed by less able performers.
- The roles and competencies provide a framework for development.

---

**Building a competency framework**

Once statistical analysis had suggested these six role types, we began testing them out through focus groups and interviews with practitioners. In particular, we asked what skills, knowledge and experience people in each type of role needed, what people saw outstanding practitioners doing, what poor performance looked like and how people in the six role types spent their time.

On the basis of this information, we developed a series of 12 competencies (see Figure Two, left). We found that each of the six role types could be defined by:

- Which of the competencies they need to carry out their role (not everyone needs all 12).
- The level of skill, knowledge and experience they need in each competency.
- How much of their time they spend using each competency – a high, medium or low amount. For instance, there was common agreement that the communication leader must have strong craft skills (writing and design), but compared to, say, the deliverer, they spend a relatively low percentage of their time working on this type of activity.

Each of the 12 competencies has three levels: basic, intermediate and advanced. Based on the data we gathered, we defined the behaviors you might expect to see a competent internal communication professional display at each level.

We also added an “ineffective” category, listing those behaviors our interviewees told us were displayed by less able performers. For example,

---

**COMPETENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building effective relationships</td>
<td>Developing and maintaining relationships that inspire trust and respect. Building a network and influencing others to make things happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business focus</td>
<td>Having a clear understanding of the business issues. Using communication to help solve organization issues and achieve organizational problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting and coaching</td>
<td>Recommending appropriate solutions. Helping others make informed decisions. Building other people’s communications competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-functional awareness</td>
<td>Understanding the different contributions from other disciplines and working with colleagues from across the organization to achieve better results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing other communicators</td>
<td>Helping other communicators build their communications competence and develop their career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and creativity</td>
<td>Looking for new ways of working, exploring best practice and delivering original and imaginative approaches to communication problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Conducting research and managing mechanisms for gathering feedback and employee reaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making it happen</td>
<td>Turning plans into successfully implemented actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Planning communication programs and operations, evaluating results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Having specific subject-matter expertise in a specialist area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision and standards</td>
<td>Defining or applying a consistent approach to communication and maintaining professional and ethical standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft (writing and design)</td>
<td>Using and developing the right mix of practical communication abilities to hold the confidence of peers and colleagues (e.g., writing, design management etc).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
some ineffective behaviors attached to the “business focus” competency are:
• Doesn’t make the link between communication activity and the business or organizational context.
• Delivers communication activity without considering whether it will serve any useful purpose.
• Lacks understanding of their business area.

Building a framework for a specific role
The next step in this project was to develop a simple table to map out the competency framework for an individual role, showing:
• The competencies needed in this role.
• The level of competency needed in each case.
• How much time we expect someone in this role to spend on these types of behaviors.

You can either build a competency framework from scratch, or, if you think the role fits one of the six types we identified from the survey, use the competency framework for this type as a starting point (see the framework for a communication leader, Figure Three, right).

In practice, competency frameworks will vary according to the size of the organization, the number of people in the internal-communication team, the expectations of managers and the specific requirements of each individual role, which is why we’ve built a flexible model.

For example, a communication leader in a large, multinational organization may spend much of their time setting the vision and standards, coaching and consulting, building relationships and developing other communicators, and a relatively small amount of their time “making it happen” or on writing and design. However, someone in a stand-alone communication leader role in a much smaller organization would probably have to be much more of a “Jack of all trades,” dividing their time evenly between the different competencies.

Next steps
More information about the 12 competencies and the baseline competency maps for each of the six role types will be detailed in a forthcoming Melcrum report. Ideas on how you use these competencies to plan your development are available to download at www.competentcommunicators.com.

We hope the framework will help bring structure to the process of defining roles, planning development and specifying recruitment, and would welcome your feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building effective relationships</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business focus</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting and coaching</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-functional awareness</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing other communicators</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and creativity</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making it happen</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision and standards</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft (writing and design)</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“OUR RESEARCH FOUND A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WORKING IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WHO SEE THEMSELVES AS SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS”

1. The Inter-Comm skills matrix is described in an article in SCM February/March 2005 (Volume 9, Issue 2) called: Developing core competencies for internal communicators.

CONTACT DETAILS

Sue Dewhurst
Competent Communicators
sue.dewhurst@competentcommunicators.com

Liam FitzPatrick
Competent Communicators
liamfitzpatrick@competentcommunicators.com
Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is in the fourth year of a cultural-transformation program. At the start of its journey, clear expectations were set defining the role to be played by internal communication. In this summary of the company’s plans and achievements, Kellie Garrett and Claire Watson describe the goals, strategies and tactics employed by the internal communication team, and the impressive results achieved to date.

**FCC President and CEO John Ryan joined the organization in 1997.** For the first few years, he focused on financial viability and positioning the corporation for the future – articulating a new vision, redefining strategic objectives, expanding product and service offerings and identifying potential growth areas.

The business results were outstanding: double-digit growth, increasing profits and great customer loyalty. But something was missing.

Like many successful organizations, FCC operated with a silo mentality. Organizational politics consumed energy that Ryan felt detracted from employee satisfaction and he worried about the impact on the customer experience.

He wanted his direct reports to work together as a real team – not to behave like individual leaders of functional areas. Although the group performed well when there was a real challenge, after the challenge was gone, so was the teamwork.

This is not unusual for top executive groups, but Ryan wasn’t willing to accept that fate. “There had to be a way to have a team-based organization where leaders had the autonomy they needed to perform, while actively collaborating to achieve a new level of unprecedented results,” he said. “FCC had a very hierarchical culture with firmly drawn divisional boundaries, so I knew I had a challenge ahead of me.”

**Cultural transformation from the top**

In 2002, John hired Malandro Communication based in Phoenix, Arizona to guide FCC’s senior leadership through a unique cultural transformation that would lead to the creation of a high-performance team. Leaders committed to being 100-percent accountable for their impact on people and business results. They let go of the traditional 50-50 model: “I’ll do my part if you do yours” – a model that breeds a culture of blame, conspiracies and distrust.

In a series of formal training initiatives, leaders were taught to speak from the heart, listen to other perspectives, be open and responsive to feedback and encourage personal and professional growth.

**Opportunity for internal communication**

By 2003, we were well on our way. FCC produced remarkable business results with strong numbers right across the board. The portfolio grew from nearly CAN$9 billion to over CAN$10 billion. Then, two things happened that created an opportunity for internal communication to become a driver of business results:

1. In 2003, we earned 50th place on Canada’s “50 Best Employers” list and a respectable employee engagement score of 69 percent.
FCC is a high performer in all other operational areas and employee engagement is a strong predictor of sustained corporate performance. But the survey showed there was work to be done to align perceptions between the senior leadership team and employees. Detailed results showed the gaps (see Figure One, below).

2. Ryan became more determined to create a high-performance team that could deliver an extraordinary customer experience and sustainable business results.

Establishing expected behavior
As a first step towards creating a critical mass of leaders who visibly demonstrate the behaviors required to transform FCC’s culture, middle management and key cross-functional teams were trained in responsible teamwork practices and communication skills.

Ryan then created a set of 10 cultural practices that explicitly outlined how he expected employees at all levels to behave (see side bar, next page). The foundation of these practices is the belief that the drive for business results must be balanced by the attendant impact on people. In other words, how the work was accomplished was every bit as important as what was accomplished. The cultural practices were rolled out to all employees in 2003.

With the expected behavior from leaders and employees clearly articulated, it was time for internal communication to find opportunities to support and promote these behaviors.

Challenge 1: Creating a strategic framework
Our first objective was to create a broader strategic framework for internal communication. A review of best-practice companies revealed that formal media represents about 10 percent of all internal communication channels, with internal systems accounting for another 10 percent. The remaining 80 percent is influenced by the organizational culture.

Our task was to put a formal strategy in place that would strengthen the 10 percent of communication we did have control over – the internal communication channels.

Within FCC, the dominant employee communication channels were immediate managers, e-mail and the intranet (Myinet). Front-line managers delivered corporate messages directly to employees and their efforts were supported by all-staff e-mails.

There was nothing wrong with this approach, but it didn’t go far enough in the delivery of clear, consistent messages about strategic direction or corporate priorities. Nor did it create a line of sight between individuals and business outcomes.

For example, a lack of central coordination was resulting in unclear, mixed messages that confused the internal audience. A proliferation of employee surveys were independently conducted by various business units and the corporate e-mail system was choked with high volume, contributing to information overload.

The intranet’s navigational structure and search capability needed major improvement, dated information needed to be archived and major documents needed to be redeveloped in a web-friendly format.

Defining our strategy and objectives
Aware of these drawbacks, we defined our strategy as: To adopt a more integrated approach to internal communication and make sure all messages focus employees on the business priorities. Our strategies included the following:

- Segment the employee audience and define communication needs based on demographics, psychographics and geographic location.
- Create a consistent voice across all groups.
- Ensure internal communication is mandatory for all major corporate initiatives and is integrated across channels and with other communication activities.
- Deliver targeted information through a variety of channels and vehicles to reinforce messaging, help with recall, appeal to different preferences and create and sustain interest.
- Redevelop the intranet and position it as an information source for corporate, business, employee, industry and technical information.
- Reduce the volume of corporate e-mail.
- Implement a monthly employee survey to replace the proliferation of one-off surveys independently launched by business units.
- Create broad awareness and understanding of key corporate drivers such as business strategy, corporate values and brand positioning.

### Figure One: Engagement survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES</th>
<th>SENIOR MANAGERS</th>
<th>GAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior management is open and honest in communication</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management is appropriately accessible</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers effectively support and implement our people practices</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management provides clear direction for the future</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the tactics we’ve successfully introduced to bring this strategy to life include the following:

1. Tracking key messages
   We created an employee key-message matrix that is shared with leaders across the organization and helps to ensure we deliver a consistent message. We deliver the rewritten message through a variety of channels including e-mail, letter, feature article in the internal publication, online through our Monday Morning Update or directly to staff meetings through managers and supervisors.

2. Adopting a multi-channel approach
   We’ve expanded our channels beyond e-mail and the intranet. New channels now include:
   - AgriCulture – an employee print newsletter published three times a year to communicate corporate information and reinforce FCC’s social and cultural fabric.
   - An online feature called “From the Desk of the CEO” to keep employees in the loop.
   - All staff e-mails from the CEO and VPs.
   - Discussion guides and Q&As for leaders.
   - Internal presentations and speeches delivered by the senior leadership team.
   - Other printed material such as pocket cards and brochures accompanied by a letter.

3. Cutting down on information overload
   Steps we’ve taken include:
   - Bundling all-staff messages into a Monday Morning Update, and bundling messages for corporate headquarters staff into a Corporate Office Update.
   - Implementing a corporate e-mail policy with defined subject-line conventions, length and approved topics.
   - Restricting the use of all-staff e-mails to the senior management team and certain key individuals.
   - Improving the functionality of the intranet and redeveloping key business tools for efficient web use.
   - Centralizing coordination of internal surveys.
   - Elevating the quality and clarity of internal speeches and conferences to focus on strategic business drivers.

Challenge 2: Supporting leadership
The results of our 2003 engagement survey also revealed an opportunity to increase trust between employees and FCC’s senior management team. Ryan and his VP responsible for communication (Kellie Garrett) believed that creating greater visibility and better access to the senior managers was vital to the establishment of a values-based culture and a high-performance team.
The challenge for internal communication was to improve employees’ perception of the visibility, accessibility and trust for the senior management team. Successful tactics introduced include:

- A “Dine-Around” program where three senior leaders host a monthly lunch for nine people.
- An online forum called SMT Exchange, where employees can anonymously ask leaders tough questions and answers are posted for all to see.
- Senior leaders author more all-staff e-mails, are more visible and accessible at company events and deliver presentations that focus on connecting employees to the business agenda.

The goals we started with
When we defined our internal communication strategy in 2003, we had some clear goals to work towards. These were:

- To communicate relevant information in a timely, consistent and memorable way.
- To reduce information overload.
- To influence an increase in the communication-related elements of the engagement index.
- To contribute to an increase in employee engagement from 69 to 74 percent.

We also had specific year-one objectives:

- To increase understanding of business goals and objectives beyond 78 percent.
- To increase employee opinion about effective senior leadership from 69 to 73 percent.
- To improve employee opinions related to senior management.

Achievements and measurable results
With these goals guiding our efforts, the measurable results we’ve achieved so far include:

- The bundling of all-staff e-mail has reduced the volume by 88 percent – amounting to around 350,000 messages over one year.
- Over 450 employees have lunched with a member of the senior management team, and 170 Q&As have been posted on our senior management online exchange.
- The survey scores relating to employees’ perception of leadership and their understanding of goals and objectives show steady improvement since 2003 (see Figure Two, bottom left).
- FCC’s engagement scores and subsequent ranking among Canada’s 50 best employers has moved from 69 percent engagement and 50th place in 2004, to 81 percent and 35th place in 2005, 84 percent and 12th place in 2006 and 82 percent and 8th place in 2007.

Cultural transformation
The internal communication strategy described in this article has set the stage to communicate cultural transformation across the organization. We’re now in the fourth year of our cultural transformation – creating an environment where people are empowered, feel safe and high performance can flourish. This involves a quantum shift in how employees behave and relate to their co-workers and customers.

Like developing a company’s image or brand, culture can “just happen” or it can be designed. Strategic communication has played a central role to create awareness, understanding, commitment and motivate changes in behavior at every level of the organization.

John Ryan has the final word: “Over the years I have learned that communication is at the heart of building a high-performance culture – a culture where people are fully engaged. Communication is vital. Without it, leaders cannot effect positive change. Our internal strategy recognizes employees as a primary audience and a key conduit to the customer, the media, stakeholders and communities. Our strategic approach to internal communication significantly contributes to business results.”

CONTACT DETAILS

Kellie Garrett
Farm Credit Canada
Kellie.Garrett@fcc-fac.ca

Claire Watson
Farm Credit Canada
Claire.Watson@fcc-fac.ca
In January 2004, Pfizer at Sandwich in Kent, UK, commissioned a review of its existing charitable contributions program, which included matched payroll giving, volunteering and grants for local community charities and voluntary groups. CC Works, the community investment consultancy, was also approached to manage the day-to-day administration of grant applications from the community.

However, it was decided that the administration could not be effectively managed until suitable criteria were put in place for the grants program. Essentially, a company cannot outsource responsibility for its charitable donations unless there’s a clear strategy in place for doing this. Although there were various policies in place for the different elements of the existing community investment program, there was a lack of strategic direction to the program as a whole.

Segmenting current grants
Working in partnership with CC Works, current grant allocation was examined by sector, local area and size of grant, and in May 2004, two-year targets were set to increase the strategic impact of community grants:

- Increase grants allocated to health-related projects to 50 percent.
- Increase average grant from UK£300 to UK£1,000.
- Increase East Kent allocation to 90 percent.

This change was designed to be gradual so that the shift in allocation could be well managed.

The new focus on the community mirrors benchmarking with voluntary organizations in the community to gauge perceptions of Pfizer. It emerged that many organizations were receiving small grants – although some weren’t sure why – but only 16 percent of the current spend was going on health-related causes. For Pfizer, a major, global healthcare company, this wasn’t strategic. It was clear that, as a healthcare company, Pfizer should be trying to improve the health of its local area by focusing on three core areas: health, community and education.

There was also a need for grants to be more locally focused. A significant amount of the spend was going outside of the immediate East Kent area. CC Works recommended that, to allow the company maximum freedom to operate in its community, it should focus grants on the immediate community of East Kent, which also happened to be a deprived area.

Auditing the community grants program
As a first step, CC Works examined the existing grants program and also conducted external auditing with voluntary organizations in the community to gauge perceptions of Pfizer.
Pfizer’s global mission: to be “the most valued company to patients, customers, colleagues, investors, business partners and the communities where we work and live.” For the community investment program a measurable mission was created: “to improve the health indicators of the people of East Kent.”

Focus on colleague involvement
The next step, in July 2004, was to conduct a review of the employee engagement elements of community investment to examine how these could be better integrated. These elements included payroll giving, volunteering and staff-matched fundraising.

For Pfizer at Sandwich, the obvious first choice was to look at volunteering. Eighty-five percent of Pfizer employees are minimum graduate level – offering much-needed skills to a deprived area. All employees have five paid days a year they can use for volunteering – this not only supports the community, it boosts employee engagement and creates opportunities for employees to visibly connect with the community and vice versa.

In October 2004, volunteering was identified as a key area for development, but for employee volunteering to be a success it had to be proactively marketed inside Pfizer and there needed to be adequate support and administration behind the program.

A database of volunteering opportunities
In conjunction with CC Works, a searchable database of local volunteering opportunities was created. Pfizer felt it was important to create a tailored database that would be furnished internally, in order to ensure a local bias and to maintain the quality of the information supplied to employees.

In order to tie in with employees’ personal development plans, opportunities in the database had to meet at least two of Pfizer’s six key competencies:
1. Team development.
2. Project management.
3. Coaching and development.
4. Decision making.
5. Effective partnership.
6. Working with change.

To fill the database with relevant opportunities, all organizations that had contacted Pfizer for grants or funding in the past three years were recontacted and asked if they would also be interested in volunteering.

Over 70 percent responded positively and 300 volunteering opportunities were sourced. CC Works helped the voluntary organizations put together opportunities that were most likely to take advantage of Pfizer employees’ range of specialist skills.

These opportunities were categorized on the database according to skill, geographic area and type of charity, allowing employees to search for something suitable for them. Pfizer wasn’t prescriptive in its approach and allowed staff to volunteer where the opportunity matched their personal-development goals, interests or was geographically convenient.

Opportunities were wide-ranging: from helping in a charity shop to teaching in a school. Importantly, because database management is outsourced to CC Works, there’s constant proactivity around seeking new opportunities and providing administrative support that would have been difficult to maintain in-house.

Launching the “Reaching Out” program
To encourage involvement and awareness, employees were asked to suggest a name for the revitalized volunteering program. “Reaching Out” was chosen and the new volunteering website was launched in May 2005. The site sits on Pfizer Sandwich’s intranet and any employee or contractor can access it.

A charity week was also held to help promote the Reaching Out program. Various charities visited Pfizer during lunch breaks to explain what they do and the opportunities to work with them. A soft incentive for staff to register on the Reaching Out site was that Pfizer would donate 20 rehydration sachets to Unicef (monetary value of about £2).

Reaching Out was also featured in a webcast from a senior leader that went to all employees (about 3,000 staff plus contractors) at the start of the week and it was profiled in the weekly online magazine, Pipeline.

KEY POINTS
- In 2003, an audit of Pfizer at Sandwich’s community investment program revealed a lack of strategic direction.
- In partnership with consultancy CC Works, a decision was made to focus the program on the local community.
- An effort to raise employee involvement through volunteering has boosted the program and linked it to employee engagement.
- The “Reaching Out” website gives employees the freedom to work with charities of their choice.
- By July 2006, the “Healthy Communities” program had been transformed and won a National Example of Excellence award from Business in the Community.
Over 450 employees registered to use the site over the next two months, with 230 employees (8 percent of staff) actively volunteering during the first year. This beat a target to have 5 percent of employees volunteering 12 months after launch. In 2005, employees volunteered 4,800 hours.

Helping employees select the right option
Employees can search the volunteering database by skill, geographic area or type of charity and are given a range of choices. Then the onus is on the employee to speak to the charity and obtain further details on current opportunities in addition to what’s on the database. The employee then applies to his or her line manager. An integrated work process enables staff to obtain approval from their manager, interact with the voluntary organization and record their efforts, keeping administration to a minimum.

Managers at Pfizer Sandwich are keen for employees to volunteer because they’re aware of the potential benefits in terms of employee engagement and skills development – a large number of managers are volunteers themselves. Pfizer also held briefing sessions for managers to ensure they were aware of the volunteering program, its benefits and how it works.

Incorporating employee feedback
The database tracks employees’ volunteering efforts, including how many hours they’ve done and their feedback on the opportunities. Employee feedback can then be accessed by other staff looking for an opportunity. The database gives employees better insight into the available opportunities and allows them to select something that appeals to them, so that both the employee and the organization where they volunteer gets a better “fit.”

The database also allows for better integration of the whole program where volunteering can provide an alternative or an addition to funding. For example, a well-known national charity applied to Pfizer at Sandwich for some funding around a diversity initiative. Pfizer suggested their diversity manager volunteer for them instead, who helped create the charity’s diversity program that is now being launched nationally.

Creating an integrated program
In May 2005, the decision was taken to bring together all the strands of community investment under one brand: Healthy Communities. This program was to include:
- Charitable grants.
- Employee volunteering.
- Gifts in kind. Community investment via gifts in kind, such as the use of Pfizer premises, resources and expertise, is more easily sustainable and can bring real long-term benefit to the local community. When Pfizer facilities are used to support community initiatives, the face-to-face contact with employees allows relationship-building and networking with key influencers. Also, inviting the community to use Pfizer resources on site “demystifies” the company.

The overarching strategy behind Healthy Communities was to support community investment holistically (i.e. using several of the above elements in combination) wherever possible. Focusing grants on the areas of greatest need helps Pfizer achieve its overall mission. However, the donation of gifts in kind can have a wider-reaching impact on the community.

Taking a holistic approach
An award-winning example of this holistic approach is the Helping @ Hartsdown project, which was Pfizer Sandwich’s biggest ever gift in kind/volunteering project. Pfizer donated and renovated much-needed classrooms at a local school. As well as financial support and gifts in kind, the project involved over 100 staff and contractor volunteers across all departments. A specific promotion on the Reaching Out website

---

**TOP TIPS FOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

- Ask yourself why you’re undertaking this program and seek clarity around your objectives.
- Focus on likely “wins” – i.e. areas with scope for improvement such as employee engagement or external awareness.
- Tackle one area at a time in stages and aim for excellence in each area rather than trying to boil the ocean.
- Communication is key to success. Create a distinct brand and identity for the program to encourage awareness and involvement.
- Integrate different community programs – a holistic approach can maximize benefits for the community, staff engagement and corporate reputation.
The Healthy Communities program has had the following positive impacts for Pfizer:

- The program supports and protects Pfizer’s freedom to operate effectively in East Kent, UK.
- Supporting and involving employees in the program engages and motivates them. The company is also seen to be living its values. In a recent survey, 55 percent of colleagues felt the program was “focused and effective.”
- The program provides opportunities for colleagues to develop skills. Twenty percent of colleagues surveyed stated that they had improved personal skills through taking part in the program.
- A healthy community is a better place to live and work for employees and will aid retention. Retention of the most highly skilled scientists gives Pfizer Global Research and Development a competitive edge.
- A vibrant and healthy community helps to attract and retain leading scientists from around the world.
- Community is one of Pfizer’s six core values. Communicating activities internally and externally gives a positive perception of the company.

Relaunching the website

In June 2006, the Reaching Out website was relaunched to incorporate payroll giving and matched fundraising under the same brand as volunteering, and utilize the existing software. All elements can now be applied for on the same site.

The number of employees registered with the site increased to over 1,000 and the number of ad hoc staff enquiries handled by CC Works increased dramatically as awareness and involvement levels rose among the workforce.

External communication

A quarterly newsletter containing a round-up of Pfizer’s community investment work, is produced and distributed widely to external stakeholders, including 3,000 local residents. Following the Business in the Community award, the magazine Community News was revamped, its circulation increased and it was also desk-dropped to all employees. The magazine also helps to raise awareness of Pfizer among local organizations.

A pocket-sized booklet was produced containing key facts and figures about the Healthy Communities program. This gives employees, especially senior leaders, at-a-glance information on the program, allowing them to act as ambassadors for Pfizer’s community investment work.

Senior leaders at Pfizer Sandwich are keen advocates of the program and having a clear brand helps them communicate its benefits and raise awareness both internally and externally.

Next steps

Despite its award-winning status, there are plans to take Healthy Communities even further. These include further research into employee feedback and closer links to personal development plans. In Pfizer at Sandwich’s Global Operations function, volunteering forms part of personal objectives – this is an aspiration for the rest of the business.

Pfizer also wants to improve team volunteering and a toolkit is being prepared for team leaders who wish to get involved in volunteering.

Finally, in order to share knowledge and best practice around community investment with other local businesses, Pfizer is hosting a Kent membership network in conjunction with Kent County Council. This will help Pfizer work closely with the local authority and bring local businesses together to share ideas and collaborate to improve their impact on the community.


CONTACT DETAILS

Pam Baker
Pfizer
pam.baker@pfizer.com

Christine Jenkins
CC Works
christinejenkins@ccworks.co.uk
How to get ahead in internal communication

Senior practitioners share their views on how to gain influence and credibility

Compiled by Mandy Thatcher

The path that leads internal communicators to the top of their profession isn’t always an obvious one. Which is why we asked a range of senior practitioners to share their thoughts and experiences on gaining the respect of those who matter. Whether its senior leaders, fellow employees or your own team you’re looking to impress, these responses provide useful insight into how to make sure you and your work gets noticed.

Editor’s note:
Succeeding in internal communication probably isn’t all that different to succeeding in any profession: understand what’s expected of you, do the job well and deliver results. But when you speak to practitioners about how they personally turned the corner in their careers and started to make an impact, it soon becomes clear that there are many dos and don’ts that can help or hinder progress. This article provides a handy checklist for those with ambitious development plans.

John G. Clemons
Vice President, Communications
Raytheon Technical Services Co LLC.

Take the initiative
There have been a few career-defining moments for me. Among them was the time when I realized that I was moving from a manager level to the decision-making role of a director.

I worked for a senior executive who hired me from a rival telecommunications company. Upon joining the company, I developed strategic communication plans to address various business challenges. During the development process, I periodically checked in with my supervisor to get his input and approval – probably more than necessary – before moving to the next steps in planning.

One day, he called me into his office and said that, while he liked the work I was doing for him, his expectation when he hired me as a director was that I would take the initiative in the job, rely less on his frequent input, and move forward with implementation and measurement. He wanted results.

His counsel was along the lines of, “I hired you to do a director’s job, so do the job of a director. You don’t have to get permission to make a difference.”

Meet commitments and think strategically
His direction motivated me to take more responsibility at this new job level. This also meant that I had to not just manage, but lead, meet commitments and think more strategically, to continue to earn not only his confidence, but the support of the entire leadership team.

I’ve found that being a communication professional who is also a leader that can be trusted, can get things done and truly support the goals and objectives of an organization, will not only impress others, but help build your credibility and lead to success.
Be smart, sharp and stubborn
The biggest lesson I’ve learned, and keep having to remind myself, is that I need to be smart, sharp and stubborn to get ahead. This is what those words mean to me in a work context:

Smart: I need to understand what Visa is doing and what people think about the business. This means constantly spending time in different departments and learning from them. I know who our customers are, what our challenges are and what our current financial performance is. I have contacts in most departments who have a finger on the pulse, which means I can have a relevant conversation with a senior person from any department.

Sharp: Internal communication is rarely near the top of the agenda for senior people, and my time with them is usually short. I always try to talk about the impact on business performance as soon as possible. If I circulate a document it will be summarized to a single page at most and I don’t use PowerPoint. I ask a lot of “one” questions, such as “What’s the one thing you want employees to do differently” or “What’s the one thing you want me to change over the next six months?”

Stubborn: I know what I want internal communication to achieve at Visa, and it has the support of the senior team. I’ve built up knowledge from books and articles, I use my education from the Black Belt training course1 and I speak to former colleagues. With this knowledge I’ve become stubborn and good at saying no, because I have the information to back up my arguments. I’ve stopped my team from picking up extra projects that won’t deliver much value. We focus only on projects that add the most value to the business and we deliver on these really well. Successful delivery is the biggest influence on any senior person.

Be creative and focus on a killer issue
Using creative solutions to bring to life important but often dull programs can create a shine that stretches beyond project boundaries. For example, I worked on the implementation of SAP – a business-critical systems program – requiring behavior change from swathes of key, yet uninterested people. Successful implementation was a big risk to get right, but it was as dull as dishwater to communicate.

Luckily there was a “Eureka!” moment. By aligning the SAP story with the metaphor of Formula-1 racing, we could tell the tale of how it would fulfill our need to create winning performances for both the individual driver, as well as the back-up team, in order to perform well on the road ahead. This storyline was a perfect match for the program’s objectives.

Launch speakers from Formula 1, great design work, not to mention fantastic collateral, all resulted in a no-hitch implementation that really resonated with people. The global company picked it up as the approach for worldwide roll out. So, faced with tedium, it can actually pay to stare out of the window for creative inspiration.

My other piece of advice is: Focus on a killer issue. If you really want to get ahead (and do be sure you really do, as being at the center of change is often akin to being in the eye of a hurricane – it’s no place for the faint-hearted), learn what keeps your business leaders up at night. Use your stakeholder-management skills to get to the people you need to help you deliver solutions, then execute, execute, execute!

Focus on value-adding work only, because if you end up working on your company’s cul-de-sac projects, you’ll never shine brightly enough for the leaders in your company to notice you.

Figure One: Table from The Pulse report showing the percentage of communicators who rate themselves as effective or very effective at listed competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning internal communication</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking corporate messages to corporate vision</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO communication</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change communication</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating to diverse audiences</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the intranet as a communication tool</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending your department in internal political battles</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line manager communication</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development of internal communication staff</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping employees cope with information overload</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing the appropriate level of budget for internal communication</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring the effectiveness of internal communication</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to get ahead in internal communication

**WHAT’S CHANGED IN THE LAST 25 YEARS?**

David Moorcroft
Senior Vice President
Corporate Communications
RBC Financial Group, Canada

I’m constantly amazed at the changes that have taken place in our profession over the last 25 years, and the degree of talent and knowledge required by communicators today to do their jobs well.

Back in 1979 when I started in corporate PR, the major skill sets were writing, editing and great media contacts. Today, good editorial skills are just table stakes, and the ability to understand business, adapt technology, think strategically, plan consummately and influence stakeholders are what land senior communicators a seat at the management table.

This change has been driven by the globalization of business, the advent of new 24/7 media including the Internet, the growing sophistication of customers and employees, increased demands for corporate transparency, and more rigorous requirements for high standards of public disclosure and financial reporting.

**MORE SKILLS THAN EVER BEFORE**

As a result, today’s business communicator has to be more capable and knowledgeable, and have more skills than ever before. They must be financially literate and technologically savvy. They must understand the impact of evolving accounting and disclosure rules. They must deal with legal, HR, political and business issues. And they must be prepared to deal with a multitude of potential crises that can arise at any moment, in any language, in any part of the world.

Perhaps most challenging, senior management today expects clear bottom-line returns for their investments in communication. It’s no longer enough to inform audiences and measure communication outputs; CEOs expect communication to engage audiences and produce outcomes – something that requires strategic thinking, planning and foresight.

A friend of mine who left a senior corporate PR job to become COO of a major public utility recently summed up the role of today’s communicator this way: “It’s one of the most important and critical roles in organizations today, and yet it’s often one of the least recognized and appreciated.”

That sentiment may be a reality in some organizations today, but with more and more CEOs beginning to realize the bottom-line value of communication, it won’t be 25 years from now.

Marc Silverside
Head of Internal Communications
Macmillan Cancer Support
UK

Understand what’s expected of you

A newly established role heightens the need for making a good impression so that people trust you and feel they can come to you for advice.

When I joined Macmillan, I very nearly got this wrong. Perhaps this is an example that other’s can learn from.

When my new CEO at Macmillan Cancer Support asked for a meeting “after a few weeks to settle in,” I was confident that my wide-ranging induction would help me understand the business and provide the basis for what I’d present to senior management.

Forty structured face-to-face manager interviews allowed me to understand needs and key issues and I started to build personal rapport. My profile was raised and at the same time, internal communication gained good visibility.

Externally, I networked with contacts in similar roles in other charities and soon found the beginnings of a voluntary-sector network. This has since grown to over 25 members.

By the time my CEO slot arrived, I was armed with input from across the charity and the results of an audit. I felt well prepared to present my vision and solutions. So I was surprised to be met with significant resistance.

I later discovered that my CEO intelligence was incorrect. What he wanted was to be asked specifically about his own views on what internal communication should do and what I could do for...
him, rather than how I could benefit the charity. I had to change my approach fast.

This could have cost me my best ambassador from day one. So my advice is: make sure you’re absolutely clear about what’s expected from you.

Of course, the insights I gained in my first few months have been valuable and since then, my results have done the talking. Fortunately, the CEO soon became an internal communications convert and advocate.

Make things happen
Delivery is key to career development – if you say you’re going to do something, make sure you do it. Put in the effort, get the results you want and be known as someone who can make things happen.
If you’re seen to “get things done,” no matter how small the job is, people are more likely to get you involved in activities and ask your opinion.

Gaining credibility and respect from senior colleagues is important, but everyone in your organization will form an opinion of you, from the people in the canteen right through to the CEO. So try and make sure that their opinion of you is a good one.

It’s not just the people within your immediate sphere of influence who can have an impact on your career, so extend your network, go on courses and get involved in professional organizations. Many of my close working relationships, career opportunities and indeed personal friendships, have come from meeting people at such events and taking the time to keep in touch. You never know how things will develop.

It’s also vital to earn respect, be trustworthy and have good manners. To recall what an ex-boss once said, “Be careful how you treat people on the way up as you never know when you may come across them again.”

One of the biggest challenges I’ve found in recent times is recognizing my own success and selling myself. Sometimes you need to take a step back to realize just what you’ve achieved. Even better, keep a log or portfolio of your successes and don’t be shy to speak about them because others won’t be shy to speak about theirs.

Finally, try and have some fun along the way. We all have to work for a living, so learn to make the most of it.

1. For more about Melcrum’s Internal Communication Black Belt training program go to: www.melcrum.com

For Melcrum’s study into budgets, salaries and trends in internal communication in 2006/07, we asked survey respondents to rate their own effectiveness at a range of key communication competencies from planning to measurement. The results may surprise you.

For example, 76 percent of respondents rate themselves as effective or very effective at planning internal communication, but only 28 percent rate themselves as equally effective at measuring its effectiveness (see Figure One, page 29).

In her commentary on the results, development expert Sue Dewhurst had the following to say.

OUR STRENGTHS
It seems where we see our strengths as internal communicators is towards the “front end” of the communication planning process. For example, being able to link a plan to the business strategy, knowing our audiences and being able to join up the dots and show people how messages link to the business vision.

These are powerful strengths. We are one of the few functions that tends to have an overarching view of our entire company, and is able to view the company and its strategy from a number of different perspectives. Being able to understand the vision and strategy, view it from an audience perspective and then create line of sight to show what those things mean in practical terms for people’s day-to-day roles, is one of the ways that we help drive business performance – by showing people what they need to do to take the strategy forward.

In turn, by knowing and working with our audiences, hopefully we’re then also able to make sure their views and suggestions can help shape the strategy and how it’s put into practice.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS
We see ourselves as less effective towards the back end of the planning process, in measuring the effectiveness of internal communication, which ties in with the feeling from previous questions that in fact we’re not doing much measurement or demonstrating our return on investment.

Research and measurement is an area where there is plenty of expertise around to call on. There are measurement conferences, research reports and publications to understand what other organizations are doing and practical training that will give you the opportunity to work in a smaller group, ask questions and practice techniques. For help with specific techniques, try your internal marketing team. Marketers are generally great with data and well-versed in running focus groups and putting together surveys. If you have an external provider to support your employee engagement research, try them too.

Source: The Pulse: Essential data on budgets, salaries and trends 2006-07
www.melcrum.com
Communicating a One Company culture at Pitney Bowes

Following rapid growth in the form of more than 60 acquisitions over six years, silo-working had developed at Pitney Bowes and leaders were failing to take advantage of profitable cross-selling opportunities. Here, Rob Hallam describes the communication elements of a “One Company” culture-change program, which has turned the situation around, simultaneously improving customer service and boosting profits.

Pitney Bowes has followed an aggressive strategy of growth through acquisition, completing 60+ acquisitions since 2001. Expansion has broadened its product mix to include an extensive range of solutions, from office equipment to global positioning software.

But the company’s many different specialisms and huge outsourcing operations meant that the majority of its 34,000 employees weren’t aware of the full range of its service offering and the potential for different divisions to work together.

As Rob Hallam, vice president, Employee Communication explains, there was a strong business case for adopting a “one company” approach. “Because the businesses tended to be somewhat siloed, even senior managers were focused on their divisions.

“Also, because we were acquiring companies and evolving so rapidly, managers weren’t aware of a lot of the businesses and how they all worked together in the mailstream,” says Hallam. “We were missing out on potential cross-selling opportunities.”

Communicating a new vision
Four years ago, Pitney Bowes created a One Company Vision statement. “Our aim was to ensure support and cooperation across the business so we could provide a comprehensive set of customer solutions – not just a list of products and services by business unit,” says Hallam. The internal communication challenge was to draw together 34,000 employees and build a unified corporate culture. The communication strategy focused on three key elements:

1. People
This focused on involving the leadership, strengthening a two-way dialogue between management and employees, communicating the culture through leadership messaging, enterprise-wide events and roadshows, and building engagement so that everyone was working together towards a One Company approach.

2. Processes
This meant integrating the One Company approach into the organization’s operations and infrastructure by shifting management roles and adjusting incentives and reward structures throughout the company.

The first step was to consolidate the company’s operating activities by appointing Murray D. Martin as president and chief operating officer in September 2004. Martin’s mantra is “Think As One, Act as One, Operate As One, to deliver what no other company can.”

“The COO position had previously been held by the chairman, so elevating someone to that...
In 2005, Hallam and his team created an original launching the One Forum throughout the organization. Communicating the One Company culture involved and build enterprisewide enthusiasm for the culture change. Pitney Bowes has always recognized the value of a two-way dialogue between management and employees and has held annual jobholders meetings, which are similar to shareholders’ meetings, for 61 years. In 2005, Hallam reinvented it as an initiative called One Forum – a series of roadshows focusing on corporate infrastructure. The internal communication function was restructured to ensure that consistent messaging reached the entire employee population. Regular measurement was a key part of the change initiative. This served to define the contribution of communicating a One Company approach, where it was adding value to Pitney Bowes and its clients and customers, and where there was still work to do.

3. Technology
It was important to find the best ways to cascade messages throughout the company and keep people informed about what was going on, without bombarding them with irrelevant communication. Hallam and his team deploy a variety of channels and media including internal print and online publications, voicemail and e-mail. Pitney Bowes is also in the process of integrating its different voicemail systems and e-mail platforms into one global system.

Involving senior leadership from the outset
The One Company strategy was an overriding policy that started at the top of the organization. “There was a big launch at the strategic leaders’ meeting which is held every January,” says Hallam. “The messaging was then driven through the organization via a companywide global communication strategy.”

From the outset, the policy was championed by the CEO, Michael Critelli, who believes that culture is central to the Pitney Bowes brand and said recently, “My first measure of success is whether we are behaving as one company.” This commitment helped to ensure that the cultural change was reinforced by parallel changes to the corporate infrastructure.

Building a two-way dialogue
The next step was to get the employee population involved and build enterprisewide enthusiasm for the culture change. Pitney Bowes has always recognized the value of a two-way dialogue between management and employees and has held annual jobholders meetings, which are similar to shareholders’ meetings, for 61 years. In 2005, Hallam reinvented it as an initiative called One Forum – a series of roadshows focusing on communicating the One Company culture throughout the organization.

Launching the One Forum
In 2005, Hallam and his team created an original and memorable One Forum launch for the 90 percent of Pitney Bowes employees based in the US. Around a quarter of US employees saw this in person, the others received a link to a website with streaming highlights.

“We put together a two-hour roadshow event, which helped people to understand our One Company approach and made them aware of all the businesses we were in,” says Hallam. “The thinking was that high change requires high touch. Face-to-face can have far greater impact on the individuals touched. From there it’s a matter of ripple effect, such as seeing improved One Forum brand awareness among employees who didn’t actually attend one of the events.”

“We wanted the roadshow to be entertaining and energizing, so we used gameshow techniques, custom-written songs and comedy specifically tailored to Pitney Bowes employees. It was a fun event, but it also included a keynote speech from the CEO and a lot of question-and-answer sessions with employees. It was entertainment with a purpose, and it was a great success with employees.”

The post-event employee evaluations proved the success of this approach. “In some cities, an incredible 90 percent of employees gave the event a top-box rating. This shows that there was a hunger for both the knowledge and the approach,” adds Hallam.

Taking the show on the road
The One Forum roadshow has become an annual event. “In a five-month period during 2005, there were 17 One Forum events in 12 US cities, reaching about 6,000 people,” says Hallam. “After some testing in March and April, the first big roadshows started in early May and continued for six months, with the final one in early December in Seattle.

KEY POINTS

- Internal communication has played an important role in embedding a One Company culture at Pitney Bowes.
- The communication strategy focused on three key elements: people, process and technology.
- The campaign has been championed by the CEO from the outset and won senior leadership support over time.
- An entertaining roadshow helped win employee commitment.
- Cross-selling ratios have jumped substantially since the culture-change effort began.
In 2006, we compressed the program substantially and drove down costs while still touching 6,000 employees. Together with our corporate marketing group, we also introduced an extremely successful ‘elevator speech’ that helps employees answer the much-feared question: ‘What does Pitney Bowes do?’

Local variations
Although the entertainment component in the roadshows contributed to their success, it was specific to the US, so Hallam gave business units and internal communicators in other regions the responsibility for communicating the One Company approach to local employees. “In Canada and the UK they conducted town-hall meetings and in Latin America and other parts of the world they produced their own variations on the One Forum theme. We made sure that they had the information they needed, but we limited the entertainment to English-speaking regions.”

A commitment to employee engagement
The appointment of the new COO and the launch of the One Forum roadshows coincided with the first employee engagement survey in late 2004. “We see engagement as very much tied to our ability to execute a One Company strategy and change our culture,” says Hallam. He sets out four ways in which employee engagement is instilled at all levels in the organization.

1. Visible leadership commitment to engagement
The CEO underlines his commitment by sending regular messages to employees via a variety of media, including voicemail and print and online publications. He also uses engagement scores to determine a unit’s overall performance rating and bonus pool. “When one senior exec’s bonus pool was reduced due to poor engagement scores, that was a message requiring no communication plan,” says Hallam. “Word spread, quickly.”

2. Celebrating top performers
Pitney Bowes celebrates its top engagement performers by running cover stories in its global print and online publication, PB Today. “This program was called ‘The Faces of Pitney Bowes,’” says Hallam. “We did 10 of these last year, so they ran twice in five editions. We’ve also produced large mural-sized photos of those managers and their teams,” he says. “We celebrate success and publish it everywhere. Our CEO loves it and we’re actually selling part of our contemporary art collection, which decorates the building, to make room for an expansion of additional One Company and Engagement photography, all of which will focus on our employees.”

3. Incentivizing managers via the reward system
Employee engagement is recognized and reinforced in the company’s formal processes, including its reward system. “We use a tool called the Strategic Architecture, which is our balanced scorecard,” explains Hallam. “It’s a Six-Sigma tool which measures employee, shareholder and customer value. Managers’ engagement scores also factor into their annual reviews, so engagement has a direct impact on remuneration.”

4. Rewarding engagement
A further program called Rapid Rewards awards cash bonuses to managers and employees for outstanding behavior, including that related to employee engagement.

Aligning the communication strategy
Hallam and his team are responsible for delivering the overall employee communication strategy. “We had to dramatically improve our strategic approach in order to make One Company a reality,” he says.

In addition to organizing campaigns such as the One Forum roadshows to publicize the culture change across the enterprise, Hallam has introduced initiatives aimed at improving the reach and delivery of internal communication and making sure messages get to their intended audiences. He has also aligned the structure of the internal communication function with the company’s unified culture.

“There were a lot of different communication groups, so we brought together all the communication leaders and formed a single Internal Communications Council,” explains Hallam. “This means that the communication functions in the different business units are working together to help drive change and improve coordination.”

Further resources
- THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND CLIMATE ON CHANGE PROGRAMS
  An article published in SCM Volume 10, Issue 6, October/November 2006

- DRIVING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE CORPORATE CULTURE
  Melcrum’s report on communication tools, techniques and best practice from leading organizations
  www.melcrum.com
Developing a global approach

Hallam is also responsible for a global communication project called Universal Reach, which is sponsored by the chairman and designed to support and maintain a unified corporate culture. “Our goal is to provide 90 percent message accessibility within our key customer-facing audiences,” he explains. “The biggest challenge is integrating our online communication infrastructure, which has nine different voicemail systems operating across the world and multiple e-mail and web platforms. We’re pulling all that together to provide better reach.”

Since 9/11, the CEO and other top executives have broadcast weekly audio messages called Power Talks. Hallam’s team has worked with the leadership to ensure that they incorporate One Company messages and as he explains, they reach most of the employee population. “About 20,000 of our employees have voicemail. Those who don’t, receive the Power Talk message either in print or online. In some divisions managers play the Power Talk messages in staff meetings.”

Engaging leadership reinforces the culture

Building on the CEO’s commitment to a One Company approach, Hallam and his team have organized leadership events – most recently at the strategic leaders’ meeting in December 2006 – showing Pitney Bowes as one company in action. This campaign has helped to engage the top 150 managers in the culture change.

“Our post-event evaluations show a strong move numerically in senior leadership’s belief that we’re operating as one company,” says Hallam (see Figure One, above). “As they’re our toughest judges, we’re pleased by the significant difference in pre- and post-event measurement.” There was also an improvement in leaders’ understanding of the company’s new mailstream category.

Sustaining the new culture

According to Hallam, rippling out the One Company messaging requires a consistent and coordinated approach. Communication leaders in the various divisions are now working to weave One Company messages into the business-unit meetings. “A lot of the messaging that we launched at the strategic leaders’ meeting are being reiterated at the business unit level. That’s been facilitated through the Internal Communications Council,” he says.

“Key metrics for the culture change program focus on cross-selling ratios, which have jumped substantially since the culture change effort began,” says Hallam. “In 2002, we also instituted the “PBI Awards” which is a chairman recognition award that goes to teams who best embody cross-functional behavior in working on projects which improve our clients’ profitability, our profitability, or both.”

“However, we’re only really a year into this. Much of the evidence is anecdotal, but what has changed is that our managers have broadened their vision and are thinking as solutions-providers rather than product-sellers. As such, they’re involving other business units out of their desire to eliminate customer pain points – regardless of which part of Pitney Bowes gets the sale.”

Adding value to customers

Ultimately, managers and employees who are well-informed about the company’s products and services are in a good position to take advantage of cross-selling opportunities. Realizing this potential enables Pitney Bowes to make extra sales to existing customers, thereby increasing its profit margins and allowing customers to benefit from a mix of products and services.

Shifting to a unified culture directly benefits both Pitney Bowes and its customers. “By focusing on the whole cadre of products and services, we can help our customers improve their businesses,” says Hallam. “That’s where One Company is critical. It enables our clients to benefit from all our services.”

**“Managers and employees who are well-informed about the company’s products and services are in a good position to take advantage of cross-selling.”**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Rob Hallam
Pitney Bowes
rob.hallam@pb.com

---

**Figure One: Measuring the impact of the strategic leaders’ meeting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I BELIEVE THAT OUR SENIOR LEADERS (MEANING THE TOP 15 EXECS) ARE WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO DELIVER INTEGRATED HIGH-VALUE SOLUTIONS TO OUR CUSTOMERS.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre SLC the top 150 managers agreed/strongly agreed</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post SLC the top 150 managers agreed/strongly agreed</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain in two months time</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UK/EUROPE

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATORS, UK
This forum is designed for practitioners who want to make social media part of their internal communication strategy. Over two days, companies such as IBM, Microsoft and BT will share case studies demonstrating their use of social-media tools. Technology experts will also be on hand to provide training and show you how to use these tools.

THE 3RD ANNUAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE, UK
22 May – Practical workshops
23-24 May – Two-day conference
This event will focus on transforming your strategies into action. Listen to case studies from companies that have achieved real and measurable results from their engagement efforts. Learn how they did it, what they achieved and how the results were measured.

THE 6TH ANNUAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT SUMMIT, UK
- 16-18 October, 2007, London, UK
After the huge success of the 2006 UK Strategic Communication Management Summit, next year’s event will once again provide you with presentations from key figures in the industry and a chance to network with your peers. Mark your diaries now — more details to follow.

THE 3RD ANNUAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT CONFERENCE, UK
- 27-29 November 2007, London, UK
Details available soon — mark your diary now!

NORTH AMERICA

THE 3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT
- 28 February – 1 March, 2007, Crowne Plaza Atlanta-Buckhead, Atlanta, US
Learn how to foster an environment where employees feel valued and respected. Hear from companies including Dow Corning Corporation, American Express, Delta Hotels and Merck.

THE 4TH ANNUAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT SUMMIT, US
- 26-28 March, 2007, Crowne Plaza, Union Square, San Francisco
26 March – Pre-conference workshops
27-28 March – Two-day summit
Attend this conference and discover how to improve employee alignment with all segments of your internal audience — from your front-line employees to your executive officers, both nationally and worldwide.

AUSTRALIA

THE 4TH ANNUAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ENGAGEMENT SUMMIT, SYDNEY
- 31 July – 2 August, 2007, Sydney, Australia
Details available soon — mark your diary now!

WEBINARS

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
- Thursday, 22 February, 2007, with Liam FitzPatrick and Sue Dewhurst
HELPING YOUR ORGANIZATION THRIVE DURING TURBULENT TIMES
- Thursday, 29 March, 2007, with Carol Kinsey Goman

TRAINING

THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION BLACK BELT PROGRAM
- 24-25 April and 1-2 May, 2007, Henley Management College, UK
- 11-12 and 27-28 September, 2007, Cranfield School of Management, UK

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION BLACK BELT MASTERCLASS: EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT
- 14-15 March, 2007, Hendon Hall, Hendon, UK
An essential two-day intensive training courses for internal communicators on effective measurement. Register early as places are strictly limited to 20 people per Masterclass.

CSR DELIVERY, ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP
- 19-20 April, 2007, Central London
Osney Media
With an excellent speaker line-up from high-profile companies including Procter & Gamble, The Body Shop, ExxonMobil, Microsoft Belgium, Vodafone UK, Dell, Ericsson and Alliance Boots, this case study based event will answer questions including, how do I:
• Build a CSR-oriented leadership?
• Get people on board?
• Integrate CSR with the global strategy of the company?
• Deliver CSR throughout the company to make it really happen?

For more information visit: www.csrleadership.com
or e-mail mariame_lindell@osneymedia.co.uk (Reference code: 910MLC3)
Melcrum, the global internal communication research and training company, presents the:

**Social Media Forum for Internal Communicators**

Engaging employees through new technology

**Wednesday 21st & Thursday 22nd March 2007, Hilton Canary Wharf, London, UK**

Two days of case studies and training will teach you how to:

- Use blogs, podcasts, wikis, RSS, social networking and tagging
- Create and launch a social media strategy for your organisation
- Choose the right mix of social media to engage your audience
- Design and build a blog
- Develop effective social media content
- Create wikis for information sharing

**Don't miss learning from social media pioneers:**

- Philippe Borremans
  European Lead, New Media
  IBM

- Ross Chestney
  Head of Communication Services
  BT

- Helen Love
  Internal Communications Manager
  Microsoft

- Debbie Well
  Consultant and Author of
  The Corporate Blogging Book

Call: +44 (0)20 8600 4670  E-mail: events@melcrum.com
### DESIGN

#### YELLOW!

The future success of all organisations will be built on trust, understanding, passion, empowerment, integrity and relationships.

The future is cool, exciting, sparkling organisations bursting with energy, life and action.

The future of brand is the internal brand first and foremost.

The future is colleague as customer.

Turning communications upside down?

No, just inside-out.

Be part of the future, say hello to Yellow!

We help large organisations bring their communications strategies to life through the imaginative use of live events, multimedia, web and design – distributed across all media platforms including DVD, TV, mobile devices, intranet and extranet.

Ultimately developing internal brands and ongoing communications that have a measurable impact on people-performance, advocacy and the bottom line.

Contact: Paul Middleton  
Tel: +44 (0)161 228 6700  
E-mail: paul.middleton@yellowcom.com  
Website: www.yellowcom.com

### DESIGN

#### BLUE GOOSE

blue goose specialize in visual communications. We make communications work faster and better. We will link what we do back to your objectives but we don’t talk (or charge for) “strategy” when you simply want tactical implementation. We use design and creativity to:

- differentiate products and services;
- develop and manage corporate and brand identity;
- align external communications with agreed values;
- internalize corporate and brand identity;
- align internal communications with agreed values;
- support organizational change; and
- help organizations better understand and define who they are.

We work for clients as diverse as: PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ford Europe, Centrica plc, Greene King, City of London Police, and Le Méridien.

blue goose is for any organization more interested in designing their future than watching it happen.

Contact: Chris Barrington  
E-mail: thinking@bluegoose.co.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 8869 8500  
Web site: www.bluegoose.co.uk

### CONSULTANCY

#### EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION & SURVEYS PTY LTD

Employee Communication & Surveys Pty Ltd is a boutique consultancy based in Sydney, Australia. It specializes in employee communication strategies, systems, research and employee surveys of all kinds. Principal Rodney Gray has been involved in organizational consulting for over 20 years following a 15-year career as a corporate human resources executive. Services include:

- Employee communication audits and surveys by questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.
- Employee communication systems, strategies and processes.
- Employee communication training workshops and talks.
- Employee culture, climate and opinion surveys.
- Qualitative organizational diagnosis (focus groups and interviews).
- Internal service quality research (qualitative and quantitative).

Contact: Rodney Gray  
Tel: +61 (0)2 9909 2900  
Fax: +61 (0)2 9909 2911  
E-mail: rodney@rodneygray.com.au  
Website: www.employee-communication.com.au

### CONSULTANCY

#### HEDRON

Internal and change communication that helps teams and individuals to develop strategies, relationships, processes and skills to engage stakeholders, support high performance and deliver change.

“Sharp strategic thinking, quality execution, effective interpersonally…”  “Creativity, drive resourcefulness, results, great fun…” say clients.

All sectors – ABN AMRO, AXA, BT, Cadbury Schweppes, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Healthcare Commission, Group 4 Securicor, SABMiller, Siemens, Southern Rail, Unilever, Wincanton.

Our clients are happy to tell you what it’s like working with us.

Contact: Helena Memory  
Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7493 0735  
Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7493 0743  
E-mail: helena-m@hedron.com  
Website: www.hedron.com

---

Employee Communication & Surveys Pty Ltd
CONSULTANCY

TRIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Trident Communications is uniquely positioned to define, develop and deliver award-winning solutions that align communication with business goals.

We advise and partner with organizations of all sizes to create high-value, practical applications. Our talented project teams provide innovative research, design, editorial and imagery for print and online.

We connect ideas and deliver results.

Contact: Peter Agertoft
Tel: +44 (0)207 536 8900
E-mail: peter.agertoft@tridentcommunications.net
Web site: www.tridentcommunications.net

FLEISHMAN-HILLARD

Fleishman-Hillard’s dedicated internal and change communication practice helps businesses focus on performing – not just informing.

We help organizations plan and implement programmes with the right mix of information, dialogue and training so that employees are engaged, aligned and motivated to achieve business objectives.

Because effective internal communication is vital to bottom-line performance, we partner with our clients to create a daily dialogue – not a monologue – with employees.

Contact: Nick Andrews
Tel: +32 (0)2 230 05 45
E-mail: nick.andrews@fleishman.com
Web site: www.fleishmaneurope.com

HARKNESS KENNETT

We specialize in internal communication. To us that means:
- motivating people through inspiring leadership;
- guiding people through organizational change;
- engaging people in delivering the brand.

Working in partnership with our clients is central to our ethos, enabling us to help deliver practical solutions supported by solid strategic thinking. All of our consultants have held senior positions “client side” so we know what it’s like to be in your shoes. The vast majority of our work comes from recommendations from existing clients – 82 percent of our clients have requested repeat work in the last two years.

Our clients include Abbey, Atkins, BDO Stoy Hayward, The Environment Agency, Marks & Spencer, NHS Blood & Transplant, Morgan Stanley Europe, Nestlé, Police Information Technology Organisation, Royal & SunAlliance, South West Trains and Vodafone.

Our vision is simple – we want to be the first call you make.

Contact: James Harkness
Tel: +44 (0)1483 222730
E-mail: james.harkness@harknesskennett.com
Web site: www.harknesskennett.com

CONSULTANCY

SYNOPSIS

Founded by change and communication authority Bill Quirke in 1992, Synopsis is one of Europe’s leading internal communication consultancies. Our clients include such companies as ABN Amro, BBC, BP, British Airways, Diageo, Ericsson, HP, Lloyds TSB, Roche, Shell and Vodafone.

We help clients use internal communication to engage their employees in delivering business strategy, and get most value from their internal communication.

We can help you:
- Develop communication strategies that support your business strategy
- Coach leaders
- Develop line managers’ communication skills
- Plan and coordinate your communication with colleagues online
- Check the health of your communication channels and improve return on investment
- Build and develop the communication function
- Measure and track employee engagement, attitudes and opinions

To take a tour of our online planning tool go to: www.synopsisonline.com/product/planningtool.asp

Contact: Jane Lebeau
E-mail: jane.lebeau@synopsisonline.com
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7490 2900
Web site: www.synopsisonline.com

 DIRECTORY OF SERVICES

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR NAME HERE?
A listing in our Directory of Services will give you a chance to reach communication professionals at some of the world’s largest and most admired companies, and to tap into decision-making practitioners.

Contact: Vincent Sorel
Tel: +44 (0)208 600 4670
E-mail: vincent.sorel@melcrum.com

编译自《SCM》magazine
### ASSOCIATIONS

**ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION CONSULTANTS**  
E-mail: gaitens@unity.ncsu.edu  
Web site: www.consultingsuccess.org  
Tel: 919 469 3895

**CIB – BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATORS IN BUSINESS**  
E-mail: enquiries@cib.uk.com  
Web site: www.cib.uk.com  
Tel: +44 (0)170 121 7606

**CCM – COUNCIL OF COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT**  
E-mail: membership@ccmconnection.com  
Web site: www.ccmconnection.com  
Tel: 866 463 4226

**CPRS – THE CANADIAN PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY**  
E-mail: admin@cprs.ca  
Web site: www.cprs.ca  
Tel: 416 239 7034

**IABC – THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS**  
E-mail: service_centre@iabc.com  
Web site: www.iabc.com  
Tel: 415 544 4700

**ICA – THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ALLIANCE**  
E-mail: amanda.foister@icauk.org  
Web site: www.ipr.org.uk/ica  
Tel: +44 (0)1628 642 044

**CIPR – THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS UK**  
E-mail: info@ipr.org.uk  
Web site: www.ipr.org.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)162 7253 5151

**IPRA – THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
E-mail: iprasec@compuserve.com  
Web site: www.ipra.org  
Tel: +44 (0) 1372 481 188

**PRSA – PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA**  
E-mail: resources@prsa.org  
Web site: www.prsa.org  
Tel: 212 460 1459

### CONSULTANCY

**HILL & KNOWLTON**

**Better business results: the bottom line**

How do I manage more change? Motivate managers? Get the right information to the right people? Show the best return on communication investment?

Sound familiar? Hill & Knowlton’s change and internal communication consultants work with companies around the world, to find the right answers for their situation.

We offer strategy, insight and creativity, drawing on our consultancy expertise and in-house experience. Plus, we deliver practical hands-on help.

We know that effective employee communication has a direct impact on the bottom line. Working together, we can make it happen for you.

Contact:  
EMEA: David.Ferrabee@hillandknowlton.com  
+44 (0) 7413 3176  
USA: Barbara.Edler@hillandknowlton.com  
+1 415 281-7160  
Canada: Krista.Thompson@hillandknowlton.com  
+1 613 786-9961

### RECRUITMENT

**VMA GROUP**

VMA Group is one of the UK’s leading executive search and selection consultancies specializing in internal and corporate communication recruitment.

For over 25 years, VMA Group has provided the highest level of service to some of the most demanding global organizations, developing a strong track record for the quality and professionalism of our search and selection work.

We have in-depth specialist knowledge of the internal communication market and can provide high-quality permanent and interim candidates with expertise across internal communication, change management and wider corporate communication. We understand the needs of our clients intrinsically and strive to develop long-term relationships with clients and candidates alike.

Please call to discuss how we can help you find the ideal candidate, or if you wish to make a career move.

Contact: David Broome  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7436 4243  
E-mail: dbroome@vmagroup.co.uk  
Web site: www.vmagroup.co.uk