



8 replies to the questionnaire

**Q1 Is your Internal Comms team part of the executive team?**

2 in executive team

6 not in executive team

The role of the internal comms teams is wide and varied – this may be the reason it has not established itself.

## Where is the Comms Team?

- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ HR
- ◆ Corporate Affairs
- ◆ Media and Communications
- ◆ Communications and Marketing
- ◆ Public Affairs
- ◆ Strategy



**Q2 Which department is your Internal Comms team in?**

## What do Comms Do?

- ◆ Manage intranet direction and strategy
- ◆ Write, edit and communicate internal messages newsletters, internal magazine, and edit articles
- ◆ Attend and/or organise meetings
- ◆ Writing copy for executives
- ◆ Strategic internal comms planning
- ◆ Project communications



### **Q3 List the five tasks you spend *most of your time* on in your role.**

These are the tasks that you have in common – all respondents are involved in some way in tasks 1 & 2 (on slide)

You also do...

Provide advice, and support for service projects and initiatives, organisational messages/major initiatives/change

Sourcing stories, writing stories

Coordinating staff lunchtime presentations

Writing and editing internal material for campaigns, product launches

Reading

# What's of Value

- ◆ Meeting project teams
- ◆ Forward planning
- ◆ Development of intranet
- ◆ Strategic internal planning
- ◆ Dealing with the media
- ◆ Writing copy



## **What value do these five tasks add to developing and influencing organisational strategy?**

Taken from the questionnaire any task that received a 4 or 5 – that being most valuable to influencing organisational strategy

## What's of Least Value

- ◆ Replying to emails
- ◆ Monitoring funds
- ◆ Daily newsletter
- ◆ Team management
- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Intranet management
- ◆ Event management
- ◆ Proofing internal communication for release
- ◆ Staff magazine



**In your opinion what are the three areas you rate as most important in your role?**

Taken from the questionnaire – rating of 1 or 2 – adding least value to organisational strategy.

Shows - there are a lot of tasks that comms teams do that have no influence at the strategic level

## Most Important Areas

- ◆ Listening to groups, feeding back and responding
- ◆ Facilitating strategy meetings / being involved in
- ◆ Organisational culture
- ◆ Build leadership communication capacity
- ◆ Creating face-to-face opportunities, relationship building
- ◆ Advising groups / projects on internal communication objectives
- ◆ Managing key messages
- ◆ Media relations



Sharing of knowledge through stories

Being the voice of the MD – bringing business strategy to life for our people

Getting staff involved and engaged in the business so they feel part of it

The tasks that you rate as most important are strategic

# Opportunities for Development

- ◆ More resources
- ◆ Early / more strategic project involvement
- ◆ Stronger focus on building leadership capability
- ◆ Developing a true two way communication process
- ◆ Closer involvement with HR
- ◆ Greater focus on proactive PR
- ◆ Increased visibility
- ◆ Effective channels of engagement
- ◆ Usefulness of information
- ◆ Organisational culture



**Do you see any opportunities for developing your role to add value to the organisation?**

Also...

- Opportunity to be fly on wall in strategic meetings
- Attending weekly exec meetings
- Internal comms health check

Results show there is a lot of scope for the internal comms to contribute at the strategic level

# Comms Offerings

- ◆ Insight into organisational culture
- ◆ Communication expertise
- ◆ Understanding of staff need / wants
- ◆ View of organisational strategy and how this affects / is perceived by employees
- ◆ Skills to build relationships with staff at all levels
- ◆ A reality check



**In your opinion what can the Internal Comms team offer the strategic team that is not already offered by some other department (e.g. HR, Marketing)?**

Also ...

Knowledge of people,

Recognizing communication barriers and developing means to overcome them

<b>The cultural conscience of the organisation</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>The facilitator of re-visioning</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Real-time communicator of decisions</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>The interpreter of ethics and facilitator of values</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Integrator of internal culture and external brand</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>Provide the Big picture context</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Productive consultation – seeking and making use of employee input</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Real time listening – engaging management on what is fed back and responding to feedback</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The communication planner</b>	<b>3.2</b>



**Rate the nine items below in terms of where your organisation would view these items as practical roles of the Internal Comms team.**

(1 = least important 5 = most important). Average taken for each question.

# The Changing Role of Internal Communication

John Smyth, Smythe Doward Lambert Ltd, UK



The aim of communication today is to reduce communication pollution in order to increase individual understanding.

Understanding is created by more than efficient management and dissemination of information.

The opportunity is for employers to recognise that the relationship between individuals and the organisation is sacrosanct and powerful and so to consider it a rightful place for investment.

A well informed employee leads to a motivated employee. Well informed means communicating to the employee!

Communication has two key objectives in the management of change:

1. The first is to facilitate understanding by those who need to adopt new processes of what will change and why.
2. Secondly to provide a process whereby employees' can usefully influence the design, or the how of that change.

Smythe has identified nine practical roles for internal communication.

## The cultural conscience...

- ◆ Provide instruments to measure relationship styles
- ◆ Facilitate debate, among leaders, on what kind of relationships will be most useful
- ◆ Work with others to refine the developmental processes which modify relationship styles



The relationships which exist in an organisation between management and employees is the most tangible experience that employees will have of that organization's culture and will in turn shape their own values and belief in the company.

If we are right about the gateway role that relationships play in determining and sustain organisation culture then efforts to manage and change culture should be directed to understanding relationships. Relationship styles and their effect are by contrast, definable and measurable and therefore understandable. So as communicators our role is to ... (last point)

## Interpreter of Ethics...

- ◆ The communication role is to understand the expectations and ethics with which the organisation must be aligned
- ◆ Communicators have the responsibility to facilitate the articulation of values and behaviours which should characterise the relationship among employees and external groups



Organisations can be little islands where internal values overrides the ethics of the society around them. For example insurance companies tried to hide behind a veil of secrecy which enabled to hide changes.

The veil is now being cut away and organisations need to become accountable. ...

## Integrator of internal culture...

- ◆ Reconcile the thinking and the programmes conceived by the inward-and outward-facing communication disciplines, in such a way that the promise and experience are aligned.



This pertains to the external advertising and promotions which does not tie in with customers real experience therefore the role of the internal communicator is to...

## Big Picture Context...

- ◆ Weave a rational story between the various initiatives which employees are being asked to implement
- ◆ Use channels and media of communication creatively to tell stories about new procedures, processes, products etc
- ◆ Develop a communication calendar which reflects the planning cycle



Can be related to seasons and what happens in those seasons in regards to farmer and his land. We celebrate spring, bask in the summer sunshine, feel melancholy in autumn and hibernate a bit in winter.

The year is broken up for us.

The annual results event is the corporate version of the harvest, the planning cycle is the sowing period. In practical terms you can develop a communications calendar which reflects the planning cycle

The calendar identifies the main changes and initiatives which warrant communication over the period covered by the plan.

## Facilitator of Re-visioning...

- ◆ Hijack the dull planning process and license a period of imagination
- ◆ Build an inspiring re-visioning process into the planning process and feed the results into communication of the big picture



Play the game of predator where participants are asked to imagine that they are a well-capitalised team of new entrants to the business by which in real life they are employed. They must produce a vivacious entry strategy designed to market advantage from their current employer.

When we encourage people to think the unthinkable it teaches them to think outside the square and produces leaps of vision which can be turned into strategy.

So he suggests that the role of the communicator is to...

## Real-time Communication...

- ◆ Real-time communication of decisions is a necessity
- ◆ Decision makers need quick implementation and the recipients want clear, quick and honest reporting
- ◆ Communicators need access to the decision making forums and technology



### Transparency of decisions

Improved psychological health of the organisations. Transparency makes it harder for complicated and time consuming deceipts to be protected. Trust level goes up.

## Productive Consultation...

- ◆ Balancing culture and process
- ◆ Management attitudes about role of employees in the decision making process
- ◆ Communicators need to ascertain whether there is a genuine need and desire by management to involve employees



Are the employees there to implement the ideas of a few without question or influence?

Or is their value to be derived from taking the time to seek and make use of employee input?

Employee involvement = empowerment, motivation.

## Real-time Listening...

- ◆ To achieve real-time communication we need to listen to what:
  - Has been heard
  - People want to know more about
  - Is concerning people
- ◆ Cyclical process – listen and engage and respond
- ◆ Communicators need to establish a connection between communication and listening



Communicators need to engage management in hearing what has been fed-back and responding so that there is a real connection between communication and listening.

## The Communication Planner...

- ◆ Today's organisations are increasingly devolved to business units, countries and teams leading to a more three-dimensional type of management
- ◆ There is a need for a new communication planning role
- ◆ The communicators need to become the information brokers – marrying the information needs of the audience with that of suppliers



Devolving into this type of management has led to swamping employees with information from multiple sources.

If we action this we ensure today's organisations are the companies of tomorrow.