BEEKEEPER

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the first step toward running your organization like a well-oiled machine! There are probably a number of reasons you're here, but we're guessing your main goal is to have seamless internal communication across all your teams and **ensure everyone has the information they need to perform their jobs at an optimal level.**

An effective internal communications strategy plays a fundamental role in the success of any company. It allows management to communicate business goals, best practices, and other important information to increase employee productivity, engagement, and retention. Additionally, it fosters a sense of community, trust, and loyalty in your organization.

That all sounds great, but where do you begin?

Creating an internal communications strategy seems daunting if you don't know where to start. Luckily, we've done this a time or two and want to share our process in the hopes of making your planning productive and hopefully pain-free. Here are some guidelines and examples for creating a valuable internal communications strategy:

1. Situation Analysis
In order to craft a suitable and well-structured internal communications strategy, it's essential to understand the current internal communications situation. Assess your current internal communications according to the following steps:

1.1 Organizational Structure
Map out the structure of your organization including:
*   Number of sites
*   Location of sites
*   Number of employees per site
*   Communication paths between the different sites / HQ (top-down vs. bottom-up)
*   Percentage of frontline employees without email

1.2 Internal Communications Channels Analysis
Assess your current internal communications channels. Determine their effectiveness and whether they meet your company's expectations and where they are lacking.

Channel	Content	Owner	Frequency	Advantages	Disadvantages
Email	Employee benefits	HR	Once a month	High clarity	Doesn't reach everyone

1.3 Stakeholders

Determine the different stakeholders who will be affected by the new internal communications strategy. Evaluate their needs in terms of internal communications and how they are using the current channels.

To gather valuable feedback, distribute surveys and build focus groups with five people from each department and different positions.
This will let you gain a range of insights that will make it easier for you to identify stakeholders' needs.

Type of stakeholder	Influence	Use of current channels	Current limitations	Needs and expectations
Production worker	Wants to be informed on a regular basis	Employee's duty is to gather important information via internal bulletin boards	Employees are responsible for obtaining information, management can't monitor whether the information was read or not	High influence

1.4 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis helps you get an idea of your company and its current landscape. Both internal and external insights should be addressed.
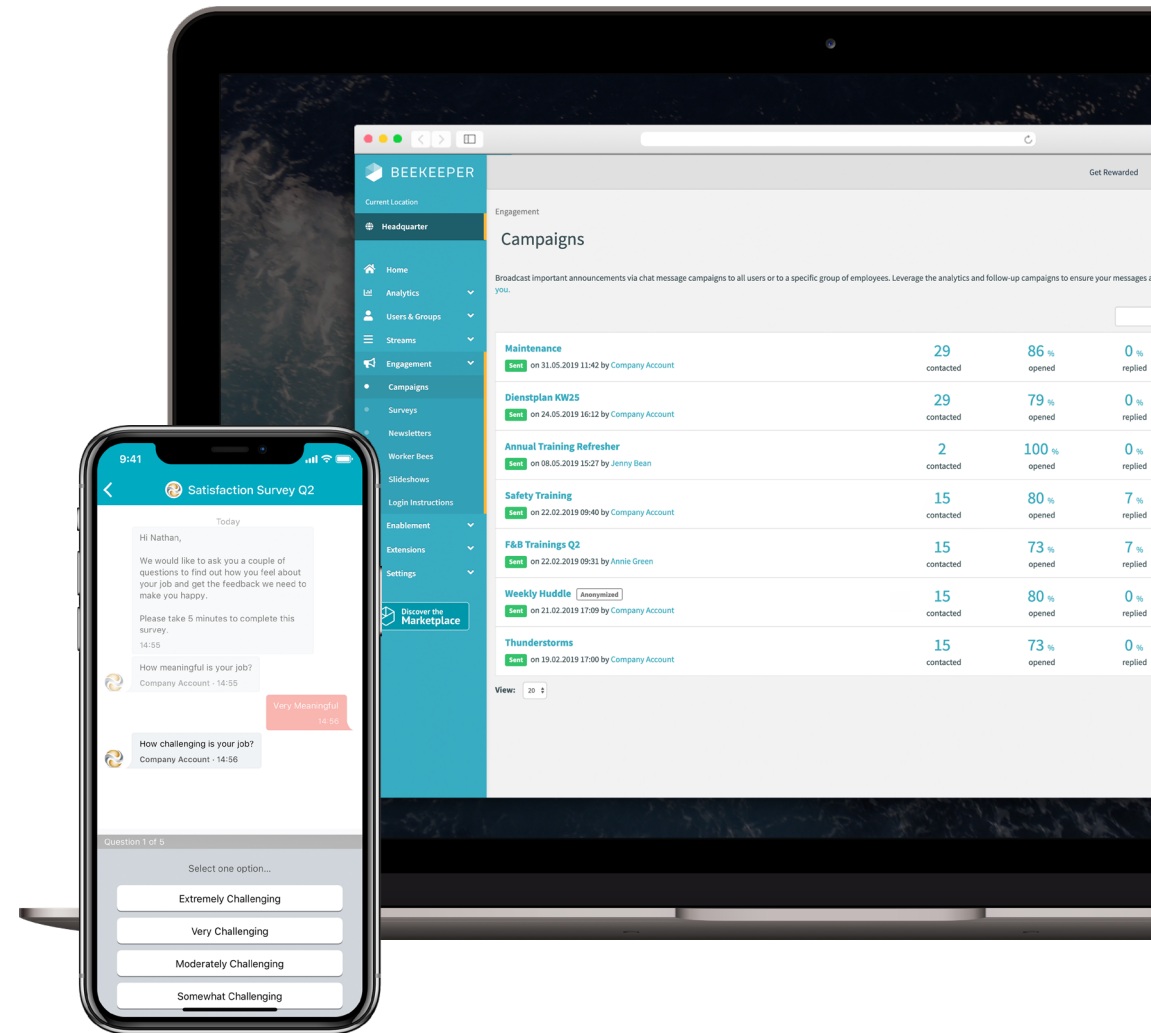
Strength

A strength is a resource or capacity that can be used effectively to achieve the objective.

To identify strengths, ask: *"What are our advantages in this situation?", "What do we do well?" or "What do other people see as our strength here?"* Build upon your organization's perceived strengths in your communication activities.

For example:
- Available content for a new system
- Employees are open to innovation and have required knowledge for it
- Bringing the digital workplace to employees is the company's main target for the current year

Weaknesses

A weakness is a limitation, fault, or defect in the particular product, service, or issue that may be the reason for your communication plan.

To identify weaknesses, ask: *"Where could we improve?" or "What should we avoid?"* If it does need a communication tactic, then you can tailor all or part of a communication plan to minimize the weakness.

For example:
- Not enough budget for a new system
- Management doesn't consider internal communications a priority
- Current tools don't reach most employees

Opportunities

An opportunity is a favorable situation in your project or organization's environment. It's often a trend or a change of some kind, or an overlooked need that increases the relevance or effectiveness of the project in question. Take advantage of the perceived opportunity through your messaging to key stakeholders.

For example:
- More systems for internal communications are available
- New tool could connect every single employee
- A digital workplace opens new ways of communicating internally

Threats

A threat is a danger or nuisance to your project or organization's environment. **Threats are often ignored until they become major problems.** Threats can be identified by looking at obstacles, initiatives by competitors, changing technology or demand, or technical requirements for your products or services.

For example:
- New systems are very expensive
- Employees might be enticed by competitors with better internal communications strategies
- Issues identifying the best suitable product for the company

1.5 Problem Definition and Conclusion

Based on your findings from the channel, stakeholder, and SWOT analyses, **list the main challenges your current internal communications strategy faces and rate them.** Summarize your findings in order to have a basis for the planning phase.

Recurring problems in terms of internal communications are often the following:

- Non-desk and hourly workers don't have access to communication channels and are therefore poorly informed about company updates and operations
- Many employees don't have corporate email addresses and aren't reached directly
- Most employees don't feel connected to the company
- Not every employee is equipped to act as a company ambassador
- Company structure is very complex
    - Many different sites
    - Various departments
- Corporate culture can't be defined due to complex company structure
    - No unity or team spirit
    - Unclear company identity

- Bottom-up communication is nearly impossible
- Peer-to-peer communication is difficult
- Employees speak multiple languages
- Stakeholders have different needs and interests
- Hard to reach the right person with the right information at the right time
- Lack of structure in internal communications
    - Decentralized structure
    - News and updates are distributed in ineffective ways which leads to outdated and inconsistent information
- Employees use other tools of communication that are not secure (e.g. WhatsApp)
- Difficult to target information to a certain group of people
- Employees don't show high levels of engagement and motivation
- Most employees ignore bulletin boards with company information
- Technological advancement isn't considered in the current communications strategy

Challenge	Very important	Important	Secondary
We don't reach every employee	x		

2. Planning

Once the current internal communications situation has been evaluated and the findings have been summarized, you can enter the planning phase. This is where you will plan how to tackle the challenges you're facing with your current internal communications strategy.

2.1 Target Audiences

It's essential to be aware of all the different target audiences in order to align your future objectives with their needs. By targeting specific groups, you can maximize the relevance of your communications and ensure the success of your internal communications strategy.

If the target audiences continuously receive irrelevant content, they are more likely to disengage. To gather insights into their needs, distribute surveys and build focus groups to discuss their expectations regarding company-related information.

2.1.1 Segmentation Criteria

Your target audiences for internal communications consist of your employees in all departments. List them all and specify their characteristics and roles in the company.

Base Criteria

Segment your audience by:

- Organizational entity
    - E.g. Function, department, region, country
- Employee type
    - E.g. Sales personnel, clerical workers, management, production site staff
- Hierarchy leadership
    - E.g. Upper management, leaders of smaller teams

Advanced Criteria

Segment your audience by:

- Employee lifecycle
    - E.g. New hires, veterans
- Topic / interest
    - E.g. Experts, users of the same IT system
- Location
    - E.g. U.S., EMEA, DACH

2.2 Internal Communication Targets

Define your internal communication targets. They can either be measured in a qualitative or quantitative way. They should always fulfill the following expectations:

- Be formulated relying on the conclusion of your current internal communications situation
- Be reliant upon the organization's business targets
- Be reliant upon the important target audiences
- Crafted positively
- Be SMART
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Achievable
    - Relevant
    - Timely

Internal communication targets can be categorized into cognitive, affective, and behavioral targets.

2.2.1 Cognitive Targets
• All targets that have an impact on employees' knowledge
  - E.g. Starting September 2017, every employee knows about our employee app

2.2.2 Affective Targets
• All targets that have an impact on employees' attitudes
  - E.g. Starting September 2017, 50% of our employees are convinced that communicating via our employee app is easier than via email

2.2.3 Behavioral Targets
• All targets that have an impact on employees' behaviors
  - E.g. Until September 2017, 25% of our employees use our employee app as the primary method of communication

2.3 Strategic Method and Evaluation Planning
If you decide to adopt Beekeeper as your company's internal communication solution, **you will develop a suitable internal communications strategy and corresponding methods together with your own Customer Success Manager.** They're experts in this field and will advise you and provide examples of successful use cases and best practices.

After the implementation, you will evaluate the new internal communications platform with your Customer Success Manager. They will show you Beekeeper's Analytics Dashboard which makes it easy to gather quantitative results and feedback.

If you want to evaluate the platform in a qualitative way, the following methods are possible:

• Qualitative evaluation
  - Sample surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Interviews with employees and managers
  - Evaluate posts and comments
  - New ideas / process improvements
  - Etc.

Now that you have the tools, you can produce your unique internal communications strategy and take one giant leap toward elevated productivity and engagement.

We already hear those greased up engines running!

BEEKEEPER

Beekeeper is an award-winning internal communication platform empowering your frontline workforces to work better together.

Our mobile-first and desktop-friendly solution lets you reach every employee across functions, shifts, locations, and languages through real-time peer-to-peer and group messaging. Dedicated streams get important messages and news to your entire workforce, or specific subgroups, through both top-down and bottom-up communication. Managers can easily send automated messages and measure responses with a robust analytics dashboard.

Quick to implement and even easier to use, Beekeeper integrates with the existing operational systems you rely on and makes them accessible to everyone in one central access point. Beekeeper keeps your frontline workforce engaged and on-task while combating turnover.

Simply put? Beekeeper makes the employee experience better.

Get a Free Demo