



Internal Communication: Pay Attention To The Five “I’s”

A few years ago, I was asked to speak to a college class on Internal Communication and I wanted it to be compelling. I wanted to open their eyes to the excitement of Internal Communication helping an organization achieve its goals. So I decided to create a more impactful, memorable explanation of what I love to do every day and share my conviction that we can make a bigger difference from inside an organization. Internal communication has to be more than writing the newsletters and updating an intranet, it needs to affect business outcomes and engage employees.

I sat down and began the task of trying to explain our role beyond the tactics. The result was a group of “i” words: **Implement, Interact, Integrate, Influence and Impact.**

Implement

The truth is that every internal communication professional has to rely on the basics - we’re often asked to write and create - whether it’s key messages, the newsletter, intranet, executive speeches, building the corporate story - it will always be at the foundation of what we do. Our challenge is to ensure that we take a strategic vision of these tactics and use them to enable an organization.

Communication can help make employees aware of programs, understand why the company is making decisions, respond and do the right things, and believe in the mission, vision, values and strategy. We all know that regardless of how junior or senior we are, our role in creating programs that communicate clearly to our audiences is at the core of what we do.

Interact

Relationships are another asset that Internal Communicators bring to the table. Part of our roles is truly understanding our audience and key stakeholders. Whether it’s informal interactions at the water-cooler or formal research, this understanding is key to successful messaging and implementation.

When leading internal communication in my past roles inside corporations, it wasn’t unusual for the receptionist to call me when they couldn’t figure out who to call in answer of a customer inquiry. Internal Communication became a real hub of knowledge for the organization.

Integrate

Internal communication professionals have to understand the big picture but also must have insight into the individual programs/tactics implemented by a variety of departments. It’s here that the magic happens.

We all complain about the silos in all of our organizations - but we play a big role in helping

connect the dots. The earlier we are brought into a process, the more likely we're able to provide the right advice and counsel to help a department communicate a program successfully and enable the right outcome.

Influence

When we combine our relationships and our knowledge - we have the ability to influence decisions by executives and parts of the organization. My former teams worked within our organization as an internal agency.

Although tactical implementation was one of our strengths, we wanted to be seen as the team that "enabled" good communication practices throughout the organization versus the only ones who "do" the communications. After all, the goal was to ensure everyone in an organization was on the same page and communicated consistently.

We provided management toolkits during major change initiatives and shared company stories through a number of channels to ensure when our employees were speaking face-to-face or through social media, they understood the facts.

Impact

This is the most important part of our role. How is what we do actually impacting the organization?

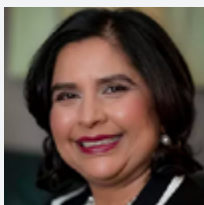
Measurement is one of our biggest challenges, but by working with the business on what they want to see as a business outcome and being able to deliver a communication plan that will help them achieve it is our greatest opportunity.

By starting this conversation, it also helps us to say "no" to those business owners who simply want to communicate so that they can put a "checkmark" beside their plan that says to their bosses that "yes they did communicate"....it didn't matter if anyone read it, understood it, acted upon it...just that it was done.

Our team demanded a reason for communication in order to reduce the noise and build trust with our audience.

I've worked for many organizations through tough times and have learned that companies and leaders that invested in Internal Communication thrived. In fact, it was personally satisfying to see these organizations deliver results, engage employees, and be recognized as Employers of Choice while going through major transformations.

Internal Communication is not a stepping stone or more junior role than PR. When done right, it has the opportunity to change a company and make a difference from the inside out. Internal Communication using The Five I's - **Implement, Interact, Integrate, Influence and Impact**, can help your organization unleash the power of internal communication for business success.



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Priya is an award-winning communication executive who provides strategic internal communication counsel to ensure leaders, managers and employees understand the strategy, believe in the vision, live the values and contribute to business results. She has a successful history of supporting communication change management initiatives for large multinational and national companies during mergers, acquisitions, reorganisations, workforce reductions, program changes, brand and initiatives launches and operational upgrades.