

Internal Communication

SACL Digital Media and
Communications Office



Internal Communication – Why Do We Do It?

- Creates consistency across departments
- Supports organizational goals and objectives
- Ensures healthy flow of information in and among all levels of employees (healthy = most useful and timely)
- Avoids or mitigates potential crises
- Open communication supports ethical behavior and positive atmosphere for the workplace

Internal Communication: How We Keep Each Other in the Loop

- Identify stakeholders who might affect the outcome of decisions and those impacted by the consequences of decisions
- Gather and share observational assessment/feedback data to determine if your and others' programs are achieving their objectives
- Assume that all information produced will be seen by additional (possibly unknown) audiences
- Communicate diversity and inclusion
- Identify connections to others' priorities and goals

When Are You Likely to Need to Integrate More Feedback Into Your Communication Planning?

- Involves Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, or CLC member
- Contains information or directives related to compliance, policies, or law
- Is connected to campus-wide initiatives – eg. First Week
- Has potentially impactful or controversial content – diversity, sexual assault, etc.

Example: Creating Super Bowl Messaging – A Partial List

1. Vice Chancellor
2. University Relations/News Office
3. Provost/Academic Deans
4. UMPD
5. Dean of Students Office
6. Office of Parent Services
7. Residential Life
8. SGA
9. Student Legal Services Office
10. Center for Health Promotion
11. Off Campus Student Services
12. Dining Services
13. Student Activities and Involvement

Internal Communication: The Role of SACL Communications Office

- Consulting on and developing communication projects
- Structuring messages
- Connecting feedback loops
- Developing strategy
- Measuring efficacy of communication
- Creating internal branding
- Training and coaching supervisors and managers to deliver messages consistently and clearly

Internal SACL Communication: Helping Information Flow Up and Down

- Five decades of studies consistently show that most employees expect and prefer their immediate managers to share important organizational information AND put it in context.

Internal Communication: Executive Leadership Role

- Actively creating an effective communications environment
- Modelling best communication practices – open, honest, and credible
- Valuing staff contributions – even those we don't want to hear
- Sharing observations, vision, perspectives, and plans
- Establishing protocols for crisis and high priority communication

Internal Communication: The Role of Supervisors and Managers – Information Down

- Move information smoothly and quickly **down** to direct reports and ultimately every frontline staff
- Interpret executive level messages clearly
- Make information relevant to day-to-day work
- Engage staff in dialogue

Internal Communication: The Role of Managers and Supervisors – Information Up

- Ask the right questions to make sure staff know what is happening and why
- Identify potential roadblocks, unintended consequences, and areas for improvement
- Move information from frontline **up** to executive level/SALT

Internal Communication: The Role of Managers and Supervisors – Information Sideways

- Break down structural siloes by providing information to colleagues (e.g. large goals, key priorities, major initiatives, impactful changes, etc.)
- Provide general information **across** departments and units (*everyone needs to know **something**, but knowing **everything** is not necessary or practical*)
- Translate expertise into non-technical language

Communication – 20th Century vs 21st Century

20th Century

1. Communicate what we do
2. Information is power
3. Purpose: Issue directives and control outcomes
4. Facilitate hierarchy
5. Increase broadcast 'range'
6. Respond after the fact
7. Create audiences and deflect consequences

21st Century

1. Communicate **why** we do what we do
2. Information is **relationship**
3. Purpose: Facilitate **engagement**
4. Facilitate **transparency**
5. Increase **interconnectivity**
6. Respond quickly and **proactively**
7. Create opportunities for **positive participation** and experience