



# Brighter Strategies

Better process Brighter results

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A THRIVING ORGANIZATION IN FOUR STEPS

Communication is at the heart of every organization. It does more than keep your employees, volunteers, and other stakeholders on the same page. Effective communication defines your goals, assigns tasks, outlines job and project functions and drives change.

Consider communication ground zero for creating and maintaining a thriving workplace. In fact, when you experience failure in any area of your organization, you can most likely trace its origin back to a lack of communication.

When employees receive only snippets of information here and there, the result is confusion, misinterpretation and rumors. Spend time communicating your goals and process at the outset, and you can minimize misunderstanding and motivate employees to contribute.

By maintaining effective internal communication between management and employees, you will forge a sense of community and create that “we” feeling that all organizations require for continued success.

With a carefully planned communication strategy in place, your organization will be able to:

- Improve organizational and management performance
- Enhance decision-making
- Develop greater trust
- Increase employee satisfaction

When you are ready to put together a communication strategy, follow the four steps listed below that we use for our clients:

### 1. Set Your Benchmarks

The first thing you need to do is set benchmarks, and the best way to do that is by establishing principles and standards. These will provide a guide to the style, tone and manner of communication, while staying true to your organization’s values.

Your communication benchmarks should be:

- Aligned with your activities and employee interest
- Straightforward, succinct and as uncomplicated as possible
- Unambiguous, which will foster trust
- Comprehensive, spanning good and bad news, to enhance credibility
- Personal and targeted to address each group you need to reach

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## 2. Communicate with Purpose

Communication without a clear purpose in mind is pointless. Identify a few specific objectives and messages that are measurable and realistic. They should be directly and explicitly linked to your overall business goals and strategy.

We recommend four core communications to focus on:

### 1. Customer satisfaction

- Focus — customer needs, satisfaction and your overall mission
- Objective — increase customer satisfaction

### 2. Employee well-being

- Focus — employee morale or satisfaction, new programs, services or benefits
- Objective — increase employee satisfaction

### 3. Internal process

- Focus — quality initiatives and projects, outcome measurement data and other items that promote operational excellence
- Objective — process quality

### 4. Finances

- Focus — actively explain the financial stability of the organization
- Objective — decrease expenses and increase revenues

One important thing to remember is that communication needs to be constant. Like water, it needs to be fresh and continue to flow or your organization will become stagnant.

## 3. Choose the Right Tool for the Job

Because there are so many internal communication tools to choose from, it is important to use the tool that is most appropriate for the message. Here are some examples of common communication tools and how best to use them:

- Use paper-based tools (such as memos, internal correspondence, newsletters, brochures, performance appraisal documents, slogans, posters and paycheck stuffers) to communicate informational data and to promote organizational values
- Use general meetings, town hall meetings, department meetings, conference calls, travelling road shows and face-to-face interactions to improve communication between managers and staff
- Use electronic tools (such as email, message boards, and the Intranet) to relay information that does not require feedback or discussion and that is informational only such as job openings, policy updates, or corporate training calendars
- Use staff-to-management forums (such as surveys, staff meetings or individual meetings) to get feedback from staff
- Use training to teach specific skills and values, such as customer service

## 4. Create a Communication Team

To ensure your communication strategy aligns your organization and employees, put together a communication team to explore all possible communication vehicles, both existing and new, that you can use to communicate to different audiences. The team can also help develop and maintain effective communication channels for your entire organization.

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Goals for the team might include:

- Developing communication “captains” to distribute information
- Selecting a point person to gather information from senior managers
- Identifying potential stakeholders, both internal and external
- Building feedback loops to ensure continued alignment

As your team gathers the above information, they can decide how to send the information throughout individual business units or departments, how to craft multiple messages for multiple audiences, who gets what information, appropriate modes of communication and when information needs to be delivered.

Evaluating communication is notoriously difficult; however, it is critical to do this if you want to meet your goals and continually make improvements to the strategy. Ask your team to periodically survey employees so they can determine communication concerns and gather additional ideas.

### **Ready, Set...Communicate!**

At Brighter Strategies, we firmly believe that a well-developed communication plan is key to an organization’s growth and success. Use these four strategies as you build an efficient, consistent, and effective communication plan for your organization, and you will achieve a community of motivated and focused employees.

**If you would like more information on how to develop a strong internal communication plan, please contact us at [info@brighterstrategies.com](mailto:info@brighterstrategies.com) or call 703-224-8100.**