

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

DEFINING THE VOICE

Of Your Organization

Creating consistency in brand, culture and content



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To successfully deliver on a defined purpose, establish workplace culture and minimise risk, an organization should consider the content and character it communicates to its team as equally important (and arguably more so) to that which it communicates to its customers and its community.

Organizational communication has the opportunity in each message, image and channel, to reinforce, validate and inform on what the organization does, what it values, and the purpose that drives it every day. When this internal brand and message is mastered, it builds trust and simply put - makes the business work better.

What is an Internal Communications Brand Strategy?

The internal brand or 'Voice of an Organization' relies on:

- Translating the company purpose into the communications purpose; and
- Defining each communications characteristic to meet this purpose and match each internal audience.

These characteristics include:

1. Tone of voice;
2. Channels and platforms;
3. Spokespeople and storytellers; and a
4. Visual style guide.

An internal brand should work within the entire communications eco-system of an organization, both inside and out. It needs to be complementary and collaborative with the external corporate brand communications, marketing and other internal branding (e.g. used by Human Resources). With clear guidelines and editorial discipline, the internal brand strategy works to coordinate many parts into one seamless communications experience for employees.

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Let's break down the key characteristics of developing an internal corporate brand.

Defining the Purpose

You can't communicate without first having a clear understanding of what needs to be communicated. By clearly articulating what the organization wants to be and the priorities it stands for, it enables the internal communications function to build an overarching strategy that reinforces and embeds the identity and priorities in every communication action or decision taken.

Communications Characteristics



1. Tone of Voice

The tone for internal communications will be specific to your individual organization, as it is a reflection of your industry, performance and culture. Striking the balance is where the skill lies.

Developing the tone of voice is not only influenced by leadership and colleagues, but also having a good understanding of the business strategy, the people proposition (generally led by HR) and the external corporate brand.

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Documenting and embedding the unique terminology within your organization also creates consistency across all territories of internal communications, aiding to develop a shared organizational culture (for example, the name used to refer to your employees or head office).

It is also a good idea to have a position on using humour in internal communications, particularly in global organizations where there may be language or cultural barriers.

2. Channels and Platforms

It is important to deliver messages in a way that remains consistent with organizational priorities - using channels that are not only popular and effective with employees, but also reflect your organization.

A simple example - if your organization has sustainability goals, yet there is a heavy reliance on paper-based channels, there is conflict between what you are saying and how you are saying it.

It is also important that the medium matches the message. Having a deep understanding of the businesses purpose, budget and resources available, and combining that with a clear insight into where your employees gather information, from which device, and the duration and depth of engagement, will inform the best decisions on which channels and platforms to participate in.

3. Spokespersons and Storytellers

Who delivers your organizational story is a critical decision. It can be as tactical as whether your internal communications function is the 'sender' of unattributed messages, through to developing diverse professional profiles and roles for the leadership team as internal spokespeople.

Creating the right space for your leaders to authentically share the strategy is important to give confidence to your employees. However, there are times when it is not right to use your leaders and having a structure in place will help to guide that decision.

Leaders are not the only voices within an organization. You also have access to storytellers – employees who are subject matter experts, or the ones who give testimony, representing the diverse and extraordinary talents across all levels of your organization. Storytellers can share inspirational and informative stories effectively and authentically.

4. Visual Style Guide

A picture says 1,000 words, and that remains true for internal communications. How you style and brand your communications can be just as important as what you are saying.

Elements to consider as part of a visual style guide includes the 'look and feel' of individual channels, leadership photography, people and product photography and whether you use iconography or artwork.

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Putting it all Together

An internal brand is a 'living' document. Once complete and implemented, it should evolve with the business, especially when supporting a transformation and change strategy. It is recommended to be reviewed as part of regular Internal Communications Pulse Checks.

Defining your internal communications purpose and internal brand strategy, creates a reliable and consistent voice that reinforces the motivating purpose of the enterprise and ultimately fosters trust with your team.

CBCP is here to help you. Contact us to review, establish and implement your internal brand strategy.