A Four-Step Guide to Improving Employee Engagement

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Are your employees getting your communications?

Do your employees read the emails they get from HR? Did they receive the performance reviews you sent? The new leave-request guidelines? What about the updates regarding their professional development funds?

If employees are largely ignoring or not responding to HR communications, the entire company could suffer. A **Gallup** study revealed that 70% of workers in the United States are not engaged in their workplaces. And, on average, companies lose **$62.4 million** annually due to poor internal communication.

By contrast, when employees are connected, organizations see an increase in productivity by **20% to 25%.**

The good news is, there's never been a better time for HR professionals to explore new and better ways to keep employees informed and engaged.

We are living in a data-driven age. It's very likely other departments in your company, like your marketing and sales teams, have adopted tools to analyze data about your company's customers. These tools have helped them stay competitive, streamlined their workflows, and given them valuable insights about customers—insights that can be leveraged to generate more revenue, more efficiently.

Many HR professionals and internal communicators are learning from these examples and using data to gain a deeper understanding of what their workforces need and want.

Understanding your employees by analyzing data about them takes the guesswork out of strategy building, and helps you deliver a seamless, tailored employee experience.

In this digital age, the one-message-for-all-employees model is no longer effective. Instead, many HR professionals are now harnessing data to:

1. **Customize content** to make it more appealing to employees

2. **Track and analyze engagement metrics** (including how many employees open and read the emails you send)

3. **Uncover the needs of the workforce** so you can deliver better solutions

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Creating employee personas

Set your framework for success by first creating employee **personas** (here's a handy **employee persona template** you can use) so you can identify what different groups of workers value.

Employee personas allow communicators and HR professionals to understand:

1. What employees are looking for on a day-to-day basis

2. What they need to achieve their goals and thrive

3. How multiple groups or individuals are different and similar

After you've created personas for all your target employee groups, study which communication format would work best for each group, such as video, engagement apps, email, etc. This will help you create a multi-channel approach that will connect with employees, no matter their geographic location or department.

"I just want to help everyone do their best work."

Christy Tan | Store Manager

Goals

1. To ensure her team hits their quotas.

2. Make sure they market promotions.

3. Keep her store aligned with the brand.

BACKGROUND/BIO:

With 10+ years of retail experience, Christy manages 6 to 8 associates with a variety of backgrounds. Her team is responsible for maintaining the retail location, stocking merchandise, marketing local promotions, and meeting their sales targets.

CHALLENGES:

It can be difficult to keep sales promotions on track. Staying on message, high turnover with employees, and scheduling shifts is hard. Keeping everyone in the loop with different shifts can also be challenging.

SKILLS:

Wide variety of experiences at different types of retail stores; eager to use technology to solve challenges; good at managing diverse associates from different generations.

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Develop a multi-channel approach

Your employees have unique preferences for when, how, and where they access your communications, but most companies still rely on a single channel for communications.

That's exactly why **HR** is transforming their programs with a multi-channel strategy that engages their employees through multiple channels (e.g., **company mobile app**, digital signage, email, intranet, etc.). If done well, you'll successfully connect, inform, and build trust with employees.

Always remember: messaging that works on email may not work for mobile or other channels. Make sure your communications are designed for the specific channel you plan to use.

Your communications team also needs to understand how to create content and optimize it for different channels. Ideally they'll have strong storytelling skills and a willingness to investigate the communications preferences of your employees.

A multi-channel approach is especially ideal because it opens up the potential to leverage mobile devices to reach frontline or "deskless" workers who are on the move and may not have a company email address. Embracing mobile devices to convey messages is an easy communications win: **95% of Americans** have access to cell phones. A mobile-friendly approach can empower deskless employees (who represent **80% of the global workforce**) who might prefer to use their smartphones.

By meeting employees where they are, you will inform everyone with relevant communications at the right time and place.

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Get executive buy-in

According to **Cliff Levy**, deputy managing editor at The New York Times, it's important for anyone leading internal communications changes to anticipate resistance. HR professionals can get **executive buy-in** by framing their company's digital transformation and multi-channel approach as "experiments." This will make it easier for you to get permission to try new things. Any "experiment" should be launched with the understanding that it will turn into a sustained program if the initial results are successful.

Also, by testing and tracking experiments, you'll be able to use the data to better understand your employees and content performance.
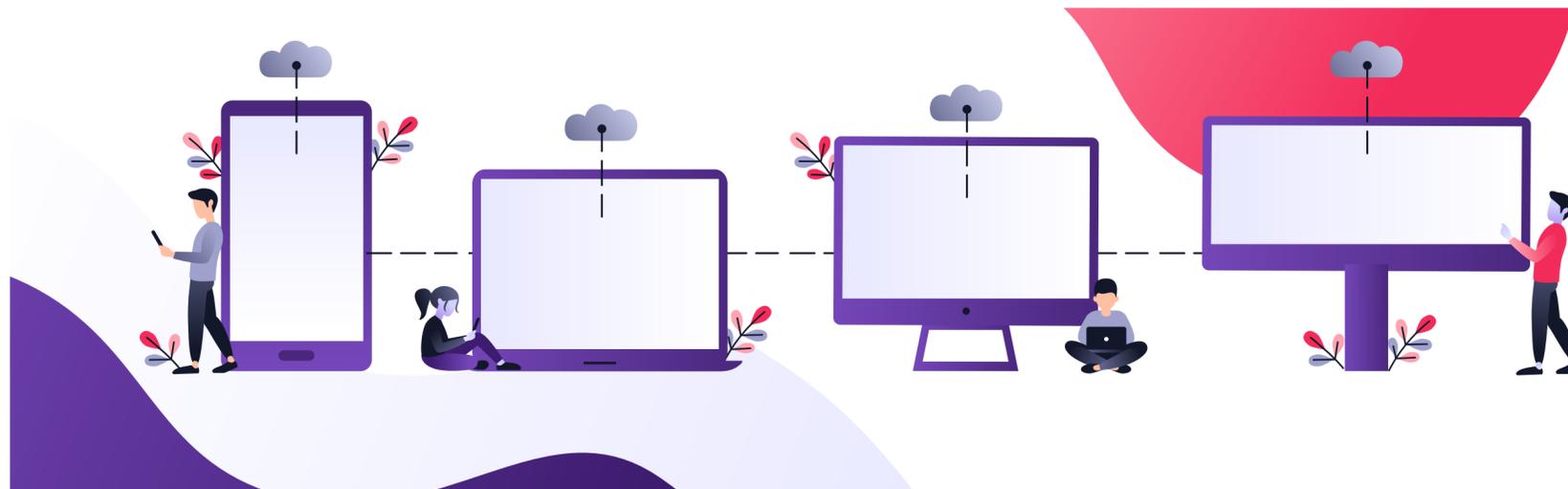
Change is hard. One way to meet resistance is by dubbing your proposed changes an "experiment." By framing it as an experiment that will run for a limited time, you get the permission to try new things. If your new approach works, you have the data to back up your position and can continue to use it. If it doesn't, try something new. You can get buy-in and innovate in a way that is measured.

If you need more help with HR communications experiments, here's a **handy template** to help you plan your strategy.

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Consider investing in a workforce communications platform

Effective Internal Communication

A well-informed and engaged workforce leads to greater engagement, **higher productivity**, increased revenue, and ultimately, better employee retention.

By following the steps outlined in this guide, you can create a multi-channel approach, streamline your workflow, and get better engagement with employees.

When employees ignore messaging from HR, the whole company suffers. And your choice of channel (email, video, mobile apps) matters a lot. To keep employees informed and engaged about everything from training to company policies, HR professionals need to follow a new path. That path should be backed by data. In this guide, we outline four new, simple steps you can take to increase employee engagement, which will in turn improve productivity, employee retention, and your company's bottom line.

Today, communicators have the technology they need to streamline their workflows by automating tedious tasks and integrating across channels. Copying and pasting to publish onto multiple channels is tedious, time-consuming, and leaves your content vulnerable to mistakes or typos.

Integrate all of your platforms

By integrating all your channels onto one mission control and creating a bird's-eye overview of your entire program, you streamline the way you communicate to your employees. It transforms and connects your strategy to your content.

Also, a workforce communications platform generates the crucial performance metrics HR professionals need to prove the value of their programs and initiatives to the executive team and analyze the success of their content to see what they might need to change or update.

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