

## **Defining Internal Communication?**

Internal communications can be defined as the direct two way communications between employers and their staff. Effective internal communication - which can be said to be "downward, upward and horizontal", is a vital means of addressing organisational concerns.

Effective internal communication has been shown to help improve employee engagement through; increased job satisfaction, safety and decreased absenteeism, grievances and staff turnover. Such improvements are linked to improved productivity and overall profitability.

As we are biased listen to someone else. Just ask Sir Tom Farmer CBE, founder of Kwik-Fit, who built his enterprise from one workshop to a £1 billion organisation.

Sir Tom's view is: *"In any business there are two types of customer – internal customers and external customers - the business depends on both types"*

Effective internal communication is essential for establishing credibility, providing direction and generating enthusiasm, in order to making things happen.

## **What is communication?**

Communication is often defined as an exchange of information. Exchange involves at least one sender and one receiver so true communication thus infers a two way process; a dialogue, not a monologue. Information can involve text, voice, pictures and in fact any data which the human body can pick up through it's five senses including emotion.

The information is generally communicated in the form of a message, designed to create shared understanding of that information in others.

## **Why internal?**

Internal communications could be described as including all forms of communication within a specific organisation or group. Be they an informal or a formal function, enterprise wide or specific departments providing communication in various forms to employees.

Internal communication deals with the exchange of information creating understanding and behaviours within an organisation. It may involve strategy, policy and an integrated use of multiple communication channels.

Therefore, communications involving union or employee representatives, without doubt something that is important in the mix of communication and consultative processes at most organisations, are beyond the scope of what would be known as the organisations internal communication because it involves a third party.

**Read how ACAS describe it...**

## **What is meant by employee communications and consultation?**

Employee communications means the provision and exchange of information and instructions which enable an organisation to function efficiently and employees to be properly informed about developments. It covers the:

- Information to be provided
- Channels along which it passes
- Way it is communicated.

## **Consultation**

This is the process by which management and employees or their representatives jointly examine and discuss issues of mutual concern. It involves seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information. Consultation does not remove the right of managers to manage - they must still make the final decision - but it does impose an obligation that the views of employees will be sought and considered before decisions are taken. Indeed, in certain circumstances consultation with independent recognised trade unions is a legal requirement.

## **The dividing line between consultation and communications**

The dividing line is not clear cut and the terms are often used interchangeably. However, there is a fundamental difference.

- Communications is concerned with the interchange of information and ideas within an organisation.
- Consultation goes beyond this and involves managers actively seeking and then taking account of the views of employees before making a decision.

## **Warwick Universities Internal Communication Department says**

### **Internal Communication - What is it?**

Effective internal communications is all about enabling us to do our jobs to the best of our ability and ensuring that all of us are working together towards the same organisational goals.

This can mean anything from encouraging you to talk to and exchange ideas with people from other departments to explaining the direction that we are heading in as set out by the University's decision-making bodies.

We use a series of communications channels and tools to keep you informed and give us the chance to listen to your opinions.

### **Why is internal communication so important?**

Because clear, concise, and consistent communications educate employees, enabling them to appreciate the value of their organisations vision, programs or projects and is a significant element in engaging the employees keeping them focused, productive and committed.

The contribution that clear and effective channels of communication can make to an organisation is substantial, not least in enlisting employees' support for business objectives, aligning everyones activities and providing some motivation to raise performance levels.

Where appropriate mechanisms are in place, employees are also more likely to engage with the organisational values and objectives offering feedback and coming forward with ideas.

Internal communication is more than the art and technique of effectively imparting thoughts, information, and ideas to large numbers of people. It has become the single, most important element that enables an organisation to share their vision and galvanise their work force to action that moves the organisation forward.