theEMPLOYEEapp®

HOW TO

Create Successful Internal Comms Campaigns

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Contents

Setting Objectives

No matter what business unit you are in, setting objectives up front helps you create clear campaigns with a well-defined endpoint. We suggest not setting goals in a vacuum. Carefully consider how your department (e.g. HR or Internal Comms) can set objectives that ladder up to business outcomes and help all stakeholders meet their goals.

Internal Comms Objectives

There are a few buzzwords that internal communicators care about, such as **employee engagement** and **employee experience**. But setting your objectives as an internal communications department has to go deeper than that.

Just saying you want to "improve employee engagement" is difficult to do. What does engagement mean to you? What does that look like at your organization? Why is it important to your business? What's the ROI of investing in engagement? And how are you going to measure it?

Of course, engagement is important. But you have to answer these questions to **get specific** about your goals and how you might achieve them.

EXAMPLE: Employee Engagement Goals

What it is: Engagement is a combination of employees opening, reading, and taking action after receiving a piece of content.

How we'll measure it: Track engagement at the campaign-level by counting content opens, duration spent on content, likes and comments on the content, and whether the recipient took the required action indicated in the content. We will also measure it holistically using surveys and focus groups to determine if employees feel engaged, informed, and like the direction of the strategy.

Why it matters: Improving engagement is essential to internal communications because it will result in better open rates, buy-in, and campaign success. It is important to achieving our business objectives because employees will feel more connected to the brand (lower turnover), more informed about what's going on (improved effectiveness), and more connected to our larger teams (improved teamwork/efficiency).

And then, you need to set the objectives for each campaign that you work on. These should still align with your department and business objectives, but can be specific to your campaign. Later on in this guide we will walk through the example of open enrollment and how you might set objectives for that campaign.

Objectives
CONTINUED

Aligning Goals with Key Stakeholders

When you are working on a communication campaign, you are likely helping another department communicate a change (e.g. enroll in benefits, new mission statement, or an IT system update).

Often, a department might just ask you to communicate x, y, and z. But other department heads might not realize that internal communicators don't just send out messages. We're **strategists**. That's why it's important to understand each team's objective to communicate the message effectively.

We recommend having a **monthly stakeholder meeting** where everyone comes together to talk about what programs they need to communicate to employees. As part of this conversation, ask these stakeholders:

- What is the goal behind your program?
- Why communicate now? What is the sense of urgency?
- What do you hope the communication(s) will achieve?
- What data can we share amongst our teams to track the success of the strategy?

Gather information and goals from stakeholders to inform your strategy for communicating. By going about campaign planning in this way, you may catch holes in a strategy that might otherwise be missed. Helping other departments be more effective and successful is a huge win for internal comms and is a big part of earning your seat at the table.

Three Cs:
Content, Cadence & Champions

A great campaign needs three things: great **Content**, the right **Cadence**, and comms **Champions** reinforcing the message and sharing feedback. Figuring out these "three Cs" will help you set up a successful campaign.

Starting Early

Remember that monthly stakeholder meeting we talked about? This meeting will be essential to getting ahead on planned communications.

There will always be crisis communications, but the more prepared you are for what you know you need to communicate, the better prepared you'll be for unforeseen communications. The stakeholder meeting should focus at least on the following month as well as the large known campaigns throughout the entire year. As soon as your stakeholders know about a program or change, you should know too.

Pro Tip: Having a stakeholder meeting and planning far enough ahead helps other teams avoid overlapping changes that impact your employees. Managers and employees in the field are often extremely busy just with their daily tasks. Avoiding major programs hitting at the same time can be a big win for your field teams! And by pacing changes, your programs will be more successful.

Leveraging An Editorial Calendar

We love editorial calendars. Whether you're getting fancy in Smartsheets or leveraging a simple spreadsheet, this is a must-have for creating successful campaigns.

Content Calendars Help You Track:

- Content for the full year
- Reminders for key milestones and dates for deliverables
- Key stakeholders who need to approve communications
- The status of all communication campaigns
- Which channels your messages will go through
- What audiences will receive each message

Don't have an editorial calendar yet? We have you covered. Download our free template here.

Three Cs
CONTINUED

So, why do editorial calendars help you launch more successful campaigns?

Because you know you need more than just one-off communications to get employees to take action. You need a series of messages, targeted to different audiences. And you need various types of communication to share the message. All your **messages and channels need to work together** to properly reinforce a message to get it to stick.

Don't just rely on your Intranet and corporate email for a successful campaign—these channels don't always reach everyone and can't support all types of content you might need. And an editorial calendar is the best way to keep all of these related messages organized and well planned out.

Tapping Into Communications Champions

An internal comms team needs communication champions to help campaigns perform well and make changes stick. Internal communications teams are usually pretty small, so having additional people at many levels of the organization to reinforce / share messages and report back to you with feedback is a huge help.

Your champions may include:

- The stakeholders you work with
- Your rockstar field managers
- A senior leader
- Frontline workers
- Or a mix of all of the above!

Campaign Best Practices

Once you have the pre-work of a campaign done, it's time to implement. Use these tips to create and measure your campaigns.

STOP!
Have you already done an Internal Comms audit, so you can pick the right channels to target messages to your audiences for the campaign? If not, start with this Guide to Conducting an Internal Comms Audit.

DOWNLOAD

Change Management Communication

Even for small changes or tasks, following some basic change management best practices can help.

For larger initiatives in particular, make sure you understand how to communicate the change. You aren't done after the first wave of messages. What is your follow-up plan? How will you reinforce the message? How do your employees feel about the message?

Want to learn more about change management best practices? Read our Change Management Communication 101 blog.

360 Messaging: Moving Towards Campaign Thinking

What do we mean by 360 messaging? Essentially, this is communicating from all angles and spreading out messages appropriately so it's easier for your employees to consume, remember, and act upon.

The message itself has many components to unpack:

- **What** is happening?
- **Who** is impacted?
- **Why** are we doing this?
- **When** is it happening?
- **Where** is it happening? (if it impacts specific locations)
- **How** will this change my daily work?

One way to think through your messaging from a holistic approach is to consider **who is communicating each message in the campaign**. Some messages may need to come from different or multiple people.

Campaign Best Practices
CONTINUED

Internal comms might share each message once, but you might then reinforce the "why" with a message from senior leadership, or reinforce the "what" and "why" from field managers and local leaders.

And 360 messaging helps you **share messages in the right medium and on the right channels**. Which messages should be text vs. video? What channels will best support that type of message? How can you keep key messages top of mind and easily accessible?

How an app helps with 360 messaging:

- Banners at the top of your News Feed keep messages top of mind
- Events before, during, and after a big rollout are accessible to everyone
- Resources can be created and stored where they are easy to find
- Create and conduct employee surveys to get feedback
- Provide talking points to managers to reinforce the message
- Share videos from senior leaders to share the why behind the campaign
- Recognize milestones, wins, and hard work on an ongoing basis

Reaching All Your Audiences

We cannot stress the importance of reaching the right people through the right channels with specific messages enough.

Ragan's State of Internal Comms Report found that **83% think it is important to personalize content** to reach groups of employees, **but only 40% can**.

Really look at your channel mix and determine if they allow you to adequately target content to different groups and if all your employees can access your channels in the first place. **NOTE:** Intranets and corporate email often exclude frontline employees, a critical group that is often left out.

Reinforcement

You'll need a plan to **reinforce the messages in your campaigns**. This might come in the form of:

- A survey asking for feedback (and then, of course, acting on that feedback).
- Adding talking points to manager pre- and post-shift meeting notes to follow up on the change.
- Or to continue reminding employees of why they need to take a specific action in your newsletter.

Measurement

Consistently measuring your internal communications campaign results in real-time will help you spot trends and realize when you need to adjust your strategy.

What to Measure

Everything comes back to those objectives that you set at the very beginning. What you measure is going to be based on what your goals are.

Here are a few places to start measuring:

- Number of content opens on a piece of content (compared to average)
  - » If you can, break this down by group. Your average opens among field managers might be higher than among hourly employees, so be sure you're looking by group and cumulatively on content that targets everyone.
  - » Look at both the highest performing content and the content that isn't performing well.
- Length of time spent reading, viewing, or listening. Platforms like email or most intranets might not show you this, but if you can track it, this is a great indicator of engagement.
- Visits to each channel per week. For instance, how many app opens per week or how many intranet visits per week.
- Number of clicks / engagements with content.
- What content receives the most likes? The most comments?
- What content are people saving / downloading?

As your campaigns are implemented, it is helpful to track opens, engagements (likes/comments), and time spent on these messages. But these are vanity metrics if you don't **tie them to back to a larger goal**.

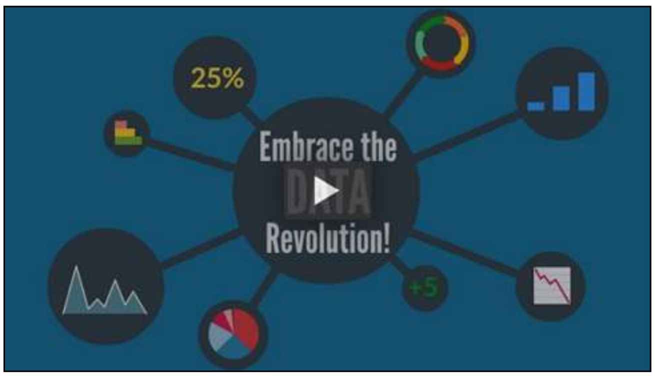
For instance, if your open rate is higher on your latest campaign than your average open rate, that's a great sign. Maybe that means the messages' titles/captions/thumbnails were more enticing and engaging.

But just having a higher open rate doesn't mean anything unless you can tie that back to action. Did your employees do what you asked?

Measurement
CONTINUED

Understanding Your Data & Sharing Your Results

Measurement is an important tool to help you establish yourself as a strategic advisor and not just a communication tactician. But did you know **nearly 1 in 5 communication pros don't do anything with the data they collect**? It's critical to share your results with leadership to show your impact. Watch the following short videos to learn how to start measuring your impact and what to do with your data.



Part 1: Why We Measure

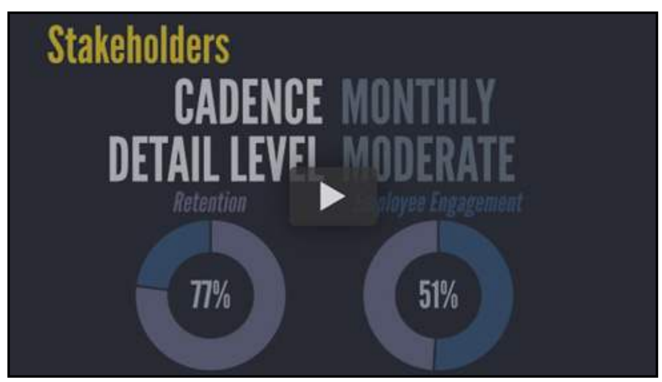
Learn why setting goals that ladder up to business objectvies are key to becoming a strategic advisor in your organization.

Part 2: Setting the Right Goals

Learn how to start measuring the impact of employee communications regardless of your experience level or access to analytics technology.

Part 3: Getting Started With Measurement

See a real-world example of how to set meaningful objectives and craft campaigns around them.



Part 4: Sharing Your Results

Learn our tips for starting to set a regular cadence for sharing your results: internally with your team, with key stakeholders, and with senior leadership.

Example: Open Enrollment

Here is an example of how you can apply our tips to an open enrollment campaign.

Setting Objectives

STEP ONE: Talk with HR several months before open enrollment begins to understand their objectives.

- Do they hope that more people will enroll in a certain plan this year?
- To reduce the number of people who try to enroll late?
- To reduce the number of individual inquiries their team receives about their options?

For the purposes of this exercise, let's assume that HR's primary objective is to reduce the number of questions they receive to the open enrollment hotline because it forces their team to work overtime.

STEP TWO: Determine how these objectives will support larger business goals so you can track success and share these results with your leadership team.

Based on HR's goal, suggested results to share with your leadership team could be time saved, money saved, and positive feedback from employees. To do this:

- **Track the overtime hours the benefits team has during open enrollment**. Use this number to compare to this year as a result of the campaign.
- **Count the number of open enrollment communications you shared last year and what they were.** Review metrics such as open rates and questions asked. Do a quick audit of this and see where the gaps are. What employees got the message? Did you have comprehensive FAQs? Was there a chance to ask questions earlier in the process or through self-service? Did you start too late? Use this information to compare with your content strategy this year.
- **Analyze what enrollment numbers were like in previous years** and use this as a benchmark.
- **Prepare a survey** to share after enrollment ends. If you've never surveyed before, you won't be able to compare results for quantitative data, but you can still show qualitative results. Use this data to create a benchmark for future years.

Example: Open Enrollment
CONTINUED

Plan Content, Set a Cadence, Find Your Communication Champions

STEP THREE: Plan out the campaign messages with the HR and/or Benefits team and determine the cadence.

HR / Benefits will know the facts and information to share, so it's good to partner with them. But remember: you are the communications expert, so own the strategy and tell them what you need.

For an open enrollment campaign, we recommend:

- **Multiple Reminders.** Embed reminders within communications, in a banner, in your HRIS portal, etc.
- **FAQs.** Can you pull those questions from last year? What changes do you need to address? Make these easily accessible early on with reminders about them frequently.
- **Rallying Cry.** These often come best from local leaders that employees know. Include talking points in shift notes, newsletters, in a video from the head of HR, etc.
- **Enrollment Instructions.** Don't forget to include some of this tactical information. Make instructions readily available for all employees.
- **Video Tutorials.** Share walkthroughs of where to go and how to enroll. For more challenging concepts, an FAQ sheet might not cover it, so look into creating videos reviewing each benefit.
- **Highlight Changes.** Share in a communication (or two) what's different from last year with tutorials and FAQs to go along with it.
- **Open enrollment survey:** You can send a pre-enrollment survey to figure out what questions people have as you create FAQ documents. But we also recommend sending something at the end of open enrollment to learn how things went and how to improve.

Example: Open Enrollment

CONTINUED

STEP FOUR: Set a cadence.

For open enrollment, it's best to start early with some of the basics (like what's changed, dates of enrollment, and where to go for information). We recommend starting to pepper this information into your regular comms (like a weekly shift note or newsletter) to get ahead of the questions that might flood your team in the last weeks of open enrollment.

Because open enrollment is usually open for a decent amount of time, start a weekly cadence of updates the week before open enrollment starts and through the enrollment period. This is where you'll share the rallying cries and continuously share where your employees can find resources.

Once the campaign is over, don't stop yet! Continue your weekly cadence. The week after OE ends, include a message notifying employees that enrollment has closed and welcome employee feedback with the survey. Then share the results of the survey and plans for how you'll improve for next year.

STEP FIVE: Find your communication champions.

HR and Benefits can help you champion this campaign. Find a senior leader, maybe your Chief Human Resources Officer, to share a rallying cry during your campaign. In addition, find field-based employees to provide insights into bottlenecks. They might have a better sense of the questions they get and what confuses them. If you don't have a focus group of field based employees yet, pull one together and make them an advisory board on these types of campaigns going forward.

Achieving Objectives: Change Management & Behavior Change

STEP SIX: Ensure your campaign follows change management best practices by using the Prosci ADKAR method:

- **Awareness:** Let your employees know open enrollment is happening, why it's important, and how they can enroll.
- **Desire:** Partner with managers and leaders to spot any barriers, questions, or roadblocks to meeting your open enrollment goals. And make sure you create space for questions and give employees the support they need.
- **Knowledge:** Survey your employees in advance to assess any gaps in knowledge. What are the recurring questions about open enrollment? What are the challenges? And then create resources to help fill in these gaps.
- **Ability:** Have regular touchpoints throughout the open enrollment process to ensure that employees

Example: Open Enrollment
CONTINUED

are using the tools, taking the appropriate action, and understanding why it matters. This is another point where you'll want to partner with managers and leaders across the organization.

- **Reinforcement:** This is an ongoing process. Ideally, you want employees to enroll and take certain actions on an ongoing basis. So, it's important to reinforce OE messages, continue to survey and share results, and track the data to measure success and shortcomings.

Measurement

STEP SEVEN: Don't forget to measure both as you go and at the end of your campaign.

- **Check the open rates on the open enrollment messages weekly.** How do they compare to last year? What messages are doing really well? Who is opening these messages? Based on who is opening your content, what groups might need to receive a message again? What content is getting more likes and positive comments, and why? What content didn't seem necessary? What messages did best?
- **Compare results against HR's objectives.** Was there a difference in the quantity of questions they received? Did more people register sooner? Was there a decrease in the amount of overtime spent addressing questions?
- **Compare results against business objectives.** Did more people enroll? How much money and/or time did you save?

STEP EIGHT: Do something with your results.

Don't spend all that time measuring and not share with leadership what you accomplished. This step is all about highlighting your strategic process and improvement plan. You should highlight how you are contributing to the bottom line of the organization by working towards business objectives.

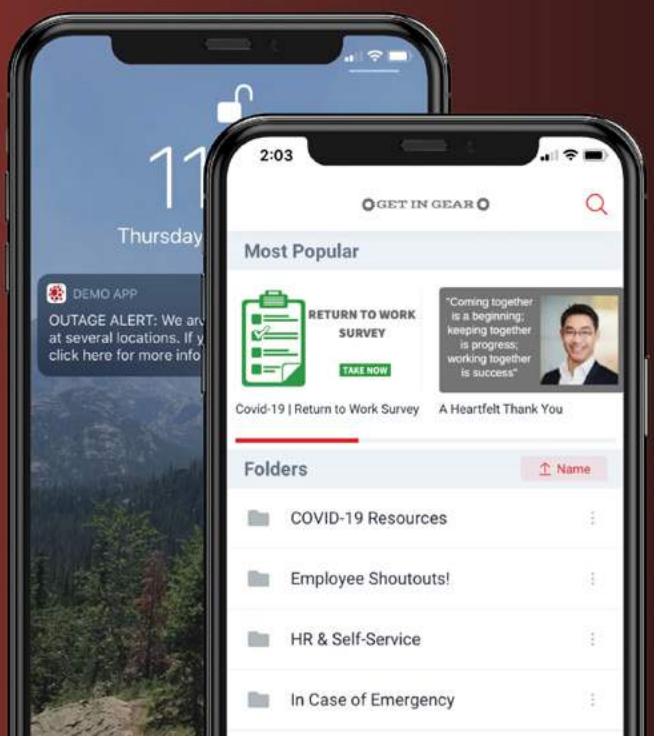
About theEMPLOYEEapp

theEMPLOYEEapp was created by communications and HR professionals to address the challenges organizations face communicating with a dispersed and deskless workforce. theEMPLOYEEapp is an internal communication and engagement solution that allows workers to have fast and easy access to the information, documents, and resources they need to succeed in their work.

Our app allows you to target information to your employees when and where they need it on their smartphone, tablet, or computer, and empower leaders and frontline managers to engage and activate employees across the organization. Unlike most traditional communications channels, theEMPLOYEEapp creates a customized, branded experience for employees, encouraging your workforce to join together in a single, centralized channel.

Our Mission is to enable the effortless flow of meaningful information for organizations driven by frontline workers.

Request a Demo



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